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A HERO HISTORY OF
GREEN LANTERN

EXCLUSIVE TALK WITH
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REMEMBERING AL CAPP'S
LI'L ABNER

RON GOULART ON
THE BIG RED CHEESE
CAPTAIN MARVEL

PLUS: HOW TO SPOT VALUABLE COMICS
LATEST LIST OF UPCOMING COMICS
AND MORE!

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EDITORIAL

BY HAL SCHUSTER

If there is one question that I am asked most by comic book fans, it is for precise information on how to secure a postion as a comic book professional, writing or drawing for the company of their choice. While many of our readers want to know the latest goings-on about their favorite creators or what exciting new projects lurk beyond the horizon to be sprung on the comic book audience, this query by far outnumbers all of the others combined.

So we decided to do something about it. Mike Pasqua, the Programs Chairman of the San Diego Comicon (the premier convention in the country for all true fans of comic books, comic strips or animation!) rushed to my assistance. He kindly gave me permission to transcribe and utilize a very special panel that they were holding—but with one stipulation. The panel participants would have to agree to allow their words to be used. This time it was Jim Shooter's turn to come to the rescue—and it is quite an experience to be rescued by a giant!—by immediately agreeing to allow us to proceed, and everyone else immediately concurred. You simply do not mess with Jim. (Of course I am quite certain that John Romita and crew would have cooperated in any case, but it certainly didn't hurt to have Jim's immediate support). Coincidentally, Stan Lee simultaneously chose this selfsame question to answer from the list of a dozen or so column suggestions that I had made to him. At first I was quite worried as it seemed to duplicate the lead feature, but upon additional thought I felt that it would make a fine introduction to the piece. As a result we have a first this issue, one of the columns ties in with lead. Between that we should see at least some abatement of the constant repitilions on this matter. I do hope that after all of you become comic book professionals you will remember where you received your initial guidance...

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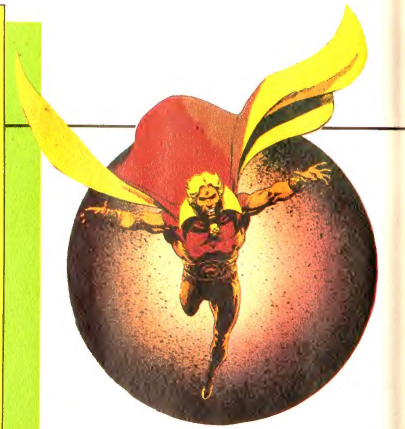

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COMICS FEATURE

columns

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Part one of the complete history of the Emerald Gladiator, the Green Lantern Corps and their mentors, courtesy of James Van Hise.
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How to spot a comic worth investing in. Mike Benton reveals the way to pick the winners.
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THE WIZARD OF ANIMATION

Ralph Bakshi has always stood in the forefront of innovation among animators. From *Fritz the Cat* through *Wizards, American Pop, Heavy Traffic, Lord of the Rings* and *Fire and Ice*, Bakshi has remained relatively quiet. Now he talks frankly to son Mark and Paul Davids, Production Coordinator of the *Transformers* cartoon series.

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ON THE COVER

Cover Characters
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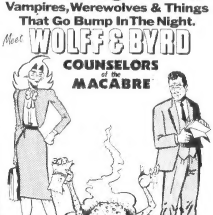
FEATURE NEWS

TWO NEW BOOKS FROM COMICS FEATURE COLUMNISTS

THE FIRST HISTORY OF MODERN COMIC BOOKS
THE COMIC BOOK HEROES
FROM THE SILVER AGE TO THE PRESENT
WILL JACOBS
GERARD JONES
COMIC BOOK Collecting for FUN and PROFIT
by Mike Benton

BATTON LASH

Now There's Legal Aid For All Vampires, Werewolves & Things That Go Bump In The Night.



Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre appears in the *National Law Journal*, causing comment, letters to the editor and laughter among American lawyers throughout the country.

For two years, Batton Lash has proven that lawyers are susceptible to satire and even whimsy. Fans of Wolff & Byrd follow their adventures defending vampire dentists, ghosts with real estate problems, and things that go bump in the night and end up in court. "Hey, somebody's got to defend them!" is their motto.

And who better than the experts at putting "the bite" on people?

WONDER WOMAN, SUPERMAN, BATMAN GET THE BOOT!

DC Comics is cleaning house. "Just because we've been publishing a book for decades," notes Vice President-Executive Editor Dick Giordano, "that doesn't mean we should continue to publish it forever." Therefore, following quickly on the heels of *The Flash*, which was cancelled with the October issue (#350), (well, as quickly as possible), *World's Finest* and *Wonder Woman* will be cancelled with issues #323 (January) and #329 (February), respectively.

"Batman and Superman have been teaming up since #71, cover-dated July/August 1954," points out editor Janice Race. "And they really don't work well together. They end their 'team book' amicably, both recognizing that they are better off fighting crime on their own."

The final issue of *Wonder Woman* will be a special double-sized issue and a *Crisis on Infinite Earths* tie-in. "Wonder Woman has been the same character for so long," explains editor Alan Gold, "that she really needs to be refreshed. We're retiring the book, but we haven't seen the last of the character."

"I'm not at liberty to discuss specifics on our plans for Wonder Woman at this time," continues Dick Giordano. "Rest assured, there will be a short hiatus, then probably a limited series drawn by Trina Robbins, then another hiatus, and then a regular *Wonder Woman* title written by Greg Potter with a completely new Wonder Woman character."

FINAL ISSUES

AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL CONSULTING DETECTIVE IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

If you were a space traveller, and you found yourself stranded on a primitive planet with no hope of escape, what would you do?

You could always set up your own consulting detective agency, to become an alien Sherlock Holmes of sorts.

At least that's what happens with Bozz, star of Epic Comics' new adventure series, *The Bozz Chronicles*, written by David Michelinie, illustrated by Bret Blevins and set to begin in October.

Bozz is an extraterrestrial who crash lands in England in the late 19th century, a time and place with no technology which would enable him to repair his ship, or even phone home.

Melancholy and suicidal at the prospect of remaining trapped on this primitive planet, Bozz sets out to kill himself. Just as he is about to do so, he meets Amanda (Mandy) Flynn, a failed actress and a lady of the evening with a heart of gold.

Mandy stumbles upon Bozz as he is trying to hang himself, and talks him out of it. Undaunted by the fact that he is an alien, she realizes that the only way to prevent him from making another attempt is to give him a challenge that will occupy his mind. Thus is born the partnership of "Boswell" and Flynn, Consulting Detectives."

"A former 'client' had given Mandy a copy of Edgar Allan Poe's mystery tales, from which she got the idea of becoming a detective," Epic Editor Archie Goodwin explains. "She sees it as a way to keep Bozz alive, and to get herself off the streets."

Bozz is well-equipped to become a detective, since his extraterrestrial nature comes with a number of superhuman abilities. In addition to possessing an incredibly keen mind, he is very strong, can levitate and speak with any creature on Earth, and has enhanced senses of sight and sound, along with the ability to sense energy flows and fluxes.

Bozz will need every power at his command for the adventures David and Bret have planned for him. They don't involve ordinary crimes and criminals, but rather thrust him into Jules Verne-style adventures and pit him against the Victorian Age equivalent of today's super-beings. The setting is historical; the excitement is definitely modern-day.

Their first case involves a prominent political candidate seeking a position in Parliament. "The odd thing about this fellow is that he has died twice before," Goodwin reveals. "When his secretary witnesses him fatally wounded by an assassin, only to walk merrily into the office two days later, she brings it to the attention of Boswell and Flynn."

The Bozz Chronicles will feature Salem Hawkshaw, an American cowboy on the lam from a group of gangsters, and Scotland Yard Inspector Fitzroy as supporting cast.

"David and Bret have put an enormous amount of research into the series, determined to give it the right mood and detail for that period in history," Goodwin notes. "Our own Associate Editor Margaret Clark is also very knowledgeable about Victorian England and has been able to offer them a lot of her own expertise.

"Together, they succeed in creating that elusive combination of fantasy, history and mystery that makes a truly excellent tale," he concludes. "Hopefully, our readers will appreciate the quality and craftsmanship, and Bozz will be around for a very long time."

The Bozz Chronicles is set for an initial six-issue run, after which its continuation will depend on reader support.

ANNUAL CONTINUES X-MEN EPIC

"The story got so big we had to have the six extra pages to finish it properly," Editor Ann Nocenti explains. "We even delayed it a month to do it right." Originally scheduled to ship Sept. 10, *X-Men Annual #9* will now ship Oct. 8.

Written by Chris Claremont, pencilled by Art Adams and inked by Terry Austin, the annual features the dramatic effort by the X-Men, led by Storm, to rescue the New Mutants from the clutches of Loki and his Asgardian minions. This concludes the 208-page epic begun in *X-Men/Alpha Flight* #1-2 and continued in *New Mutants Special* #1.

ELVIRA TO RUN HOUSE

DC Comics has contracted with Panacea Entertainment for the use of television horror movie hostess Elvira in a regular comic book. Elvira, vampish hostess of *Movie Macabre*, which hosted the revived *House of Mystery* comic book from DC Comics. Her likeness will appear in *Elvira's House of Mystery* #1 (January cover date), a 64-page Halloween Special anthology. This issue will launch a regular monthly series to begin early in 1986.

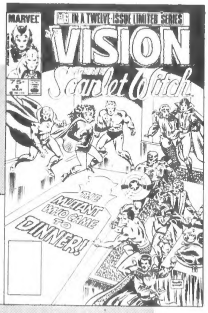
"This will be a frightfully—I couldn't resist—great joint effort," notes DC Comics Vice President-Executive Editor Dick Giordano. "Elvira's popularity on television will help introduce horror enthusiasts to our comic books. In addition, we'll introduce our horror readers to Elvira and her television show. And what could be better than to launch the entire series with a special issue timed for Halloween release?"

Elvira began as a local Los Angeles television show hostess for Bminus horror flicks. Her *Movie Macabre* is now syndicated in over 50 markets around the U.S., including Chicago and Boston. Elvira has been a guest on numerous national television talk shows, including *The Tonight Show* and *Merv Griffin*. She is currently scheduled to star for the second year in a row in the Halloween episode of ABC TV's *The Fall Guy*. Her film appearances include *Pee Wee's Big Adventure* and the upcoming *Alan Quatermain and the City of Gold*, opposite Richard Chamberlain.

In *Elvira's House of Mystery*, she will introduce the stories that appear in each issue. She will "usher" the reader into the House, where tales of ghoulish terror take place. On occasion, she may interject comments during the story itself.

GIANT-SIZED ANNUAL

DR. STRANGE #75: Continuing the Mephisto storyline from THE FANTASTIC FOUR, Strange is torn between his concern for innocent bystanders and the task of saving Topaz (from WEREWOLF BY NIGHT). . . from herself! Written by Roger Stern, pencils by Sal Buscema, finishes by Mark Badger.



THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH #6: Thanksgiving dinner in Leonia guest stars Capt. America, Doctor Strange, Sub-Mariner, Quicksilver and Crystal. And after dinner—Magneto and the original Brotherhood of Evil Mutants attack! Written by Steve Englehart, art by Richard Howell and Frank Springer.

FANTASTIC FOUR #287: Beginning the revelation of the fate of Doctor Doom, and the fateful return of The Invincible Man (or is it?). Written and penciled by John Byrne, inked by Joe Sinnott.

DAREDEVIL #228: Even as Daredevil continues his all-out ware against the Kingpin, Matt Murdock's breakdown precipitates his dizzying descent into "Purgatory." Written by Frank Miller, illustrated by David Mazzucchelli.

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Comics Consumer Guide

MARVEL COMICS

Titles shipping October 1, on sale October 22.

THE THING 32—The women take over the wrestling ring. Written by Mike Carlin, penciled by Ron Wilson and inked by Dave Simons.

DAREDEVIL 227—Frank Miller's back—with the Kingpin. Written by Frank Miller and art by David Mazzuchelli.

THE NEW MUTANTS 36—The Beyonder offers Illyana salvation. But the price is . . . Kitty Pride! "Subway to Salvation" is written by Chris Claremont, penciled by Mary Wilshire and inked by Bill Seinkiewicz. A Secret Wars II cross-over.

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN 11—Peter Parker. . . a hero? That's when Spider-Man's trouble really begins in "Vigilante Man" plotted by Danny Fingeroth, scripted by Bill Mantlo and drawn by Bob McLeod.

WEST COAST AVENGERS 5—Mockingbird agrees to help Tigra find out why the cat in her is taking over, and the trail leads them to the Werewolf by Night and Michael Morbius. "Ins and Outs" is by Steve Englehart, penciled by Al Milgron and inked by Joe Sinnott.

PLANET TERRY 11—Written by Dave Manak, penciled by Warren Kremer and inked by Jacqueline Roettcher. A Star Comic.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE 6—"Make My Day" is written by Stan Kay, penciled by Howard Post and inked by Roberta Edelman. A Star Comic.

THUNDERCATS 2—It's all-out war on Third Earth as the evil mutants led by Mumm-Ra battle the mighty Thundercats for control of the planet. "Tears of Sunrise" is written by David Michelinie, penciled by Jim Mooney and inked by Brett Breeding. A Star Comic.

Misty [Limited Series] 2—Teenage shenanigans go from goofy to bizarre for Misty in this special Halloween spectacular! Guest-starring Millie the Model. Written and drawn by Trina Robbins. A Star Comic.

RED SONJA 12—The dreaded Ice Queen wants to sacrifice Red Sonja's friend to the powers of the Dark. "Descent!" is written by Louise Simonson, penciled by Mary Wilshire and inked by Art Nichols.

SQUADRON SUPREME 6—Three members resign—six new members join! The Squadron gets a new headquarters. "The Inner Circle" is written by Mark Gruenwald, guest-penciled by Paul Ryan and inked by Sam De la Rosa.

CONAN ANNUAL 10—The castle of Alhmet is built on "scorched earth," and it's up to Conan and his Turanian troops to discover what that means before it's too late. Written by Jim Owsley and drawn by Ernie Chan.

THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE DELUXE EDITION 3—From Cloak through Doctor Strange. Wraparound cover by John Byrne and Joe Rubinstein.

Titles shipping October 8, on sale October 29.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 274—The Puma wants to kill the Beyonder. "To Battle the Beyonder" is written by Tom DeFalco, penciled by Ron Frenz and inked by Joe Rubinstein. A cross-over with SECRET WARS II and PETER PARKER THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN 111.

CAPTAIN AMERICA 314—Nighthawk from the Squadron Supreme journeys to Earth to get help from the Avengers. "Asylum" is written by Mark Gruenwald, penciled by Paul Neary and inked by Dennis Janke.

MICRONAUTS 17—Written by Peter B. Gillis, penciled by Kelly Jones and inked by Danny Bulanadi.

ALPHA FLIGHT 31—Puck is forced to make the most difficult decision of his life. Should he save Heather or kill Alpha Flight's greatest foe, Deadly Ernest. "The Grateful Dead" is written by Bill Mantlo, penciled by Mike Mignola and inked by Gerry Talaoc. Cover by Mignola.

WALLY THE WIZARD 11—Written and penciled by Ben Brown and inked by Vince Colletta. A Star Comic.

TOP DOG [Limited Series] 6—Written by Lennie Herman, penciled by Warren Kremer and inked by Jacqueline Roettcher. A Star Comic.

HEATHCLIFF 6—Written by Angelo DeCesare, penciled by Warren Kremer and inked by Jacqueline Roettcher. A Star Comic.

DOCTOR STRANGE 75—Wong's secret past revealed. Doctor Strange and Sarah meet Topaz. "Poor Soul" is scripted by Peter B. Gillis, penciled and inked by Mark Badger.

GROO THE WANDERER 12—Groo meets a group of thespians, and becomes the greatest actor in the theatrical world, with his award winning performance as an inept barbarian who accidentally stabs people. By Sergio Aragones, with help from Mark Evanier. An Epic Comic.

THE VISION AND SCARLET WITCH [Limited Series] 5—Wanda journeys to the Land of the Dead to stop Samhain. Some of the strangest guest appearances ever by Dark Phoenix, Zemo, Thorn, Egghead, Korvac, Dracula, Whizzer, Miss America, Agatha Harkness and Wanda's mother. "All Hallow's Eve" is written by Steve Englehart, penciled by Richard Howell and inked by Jack Abel.

THE OFFICIAL MARVEL COMICS INDEX TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR 3—The complete story synopses and color cover reproductions of FANTASTIC FOUR 19 through 30, and Annuals 2 and 3. Plus a wrap-around cover by Keith Pollard. Compiled by George Olshevsky.

LONGSHOT [Limited Series] 5—Longshot discovers why he's on Earth. He must team up with Doctor Strange to stop Mojo from destroying the planet. "A Snake Coils. . ." is a double-sized saga written by Ann Nocenti, penciled by Art Adams and inked by Whilce Portacio.

POWER PACK 19—With their mother in the hospital, Katie decides that the Power family needs something to cheer themselves up a bit—a Thanksgiving party. Wait until you see the guest list: Beta Ray Bill, Cloak and Dagger, Wolverine, Kitty and Leach. This double-sized blow-out is written by Louise Simonson, penciled by Brent Anderson and inked by Bob Wiacek.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN 120—Written by Larry Yakata and drawn by Pablo Marcos. A Marvel Magazine for Mature Readers.

THE SISTERHOOD OF STEEL 7—Boronwe goes on trial for treason! Plus: the truth on how Lanna lost her arm and how Vanalis received her scar. "Vows and Vengeances" is written by Christy Marx and drawn by Mike Vosburg. An Epic Comic. For Mature Readers. Direct Sales only.

THE BOZZ CHRONICLES 1—He's an alien from an advanced world stranded in Victorian England. The formation of the most atypical detective agency nearly ol' England has ever seen! Written by David Michelinie and drawn by Brett Blevins. An Epic Comic. Direct Sales Only. For Mature Readers.

Titles shipping October 15, for sale November 5.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK 316—The Hulk is tearing a New Mexico town apart. And nothing Wonder Man, the Sub-Mariner, Hercules and the new Iron Man can do will stop him! Meanwhile the She-Hulk must bring Bruce Banner out of his coma. But will doing so destroy his sanity? "Battleground!" is written and drawn by John Byrne with an inking assist by Keith Williams.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

HEROES

by James Van Hise

With DC's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* pulling continuity in line and showing the door to the Flash and Supergirl, it seems only fitting to take a look at another of DC's Silver Age heroes. Green Lantern was the second of the company's Golden Age characters to be revived in a new incarnation.

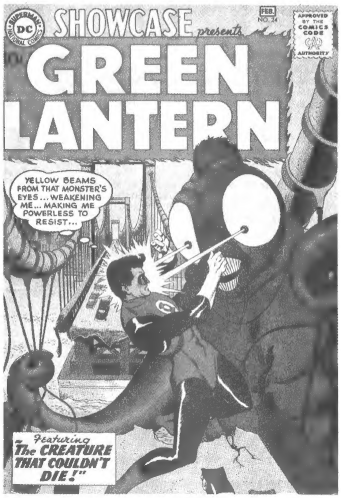
Julius Schwartz, the Flash's editor and the hand behind the character's revival in *Showcase*, also guided the revival of Green Lantern. Turning to Flash scripter John Broome and *Strange Adventures* artist Gil Kane, *Showcase* 22 (Sept. - Oct. 1959) featured three stories. The shortest, at six pages, tells GL's origin: Abin Sur, a dying member of the Green Lantern Corps, crashes his spaceship on Earth and uses the power of the ring to find a worthy soul he can pass the mantle on to. That man is test pilot Hal Jordan. This telling of the origin is so brief and superficial that when the 1961 *Secret Origins* reprint special was released, it included the expanded version of the origin which appears in *Green Lantern* #1 (July-Aug. 1960).

The balance of *Showcase* #22 features pretty standard tales of GL versus saboteurs. About all they do is introduce his love interest Carol Ferris (who is also Hal Jordan's boss).

At first, when a mysterious voice contacts him via the power battery (the green lantern he uses to charge his ring every 24 hours), he has no idea what the source of the summons is. The voice informs him of trouble in his space sector. The power of his ring allows him to fly through space encased in a protective barrier, which makes one wonder why the other power battery operative, Abin Sur, crashed to Earth in a spaceship. In fact, this very puzzle would form the basis of a story several years later.

In *Showcase* #23's "Summons From Space," GL flies to Venus to save a primitive race from winged creatures. A very straightforward and uncomplicated adventure.

"The Invisible Destroyer" (*Showcase* #23) is GL's first confrontation with a costumed villain. As fantastic as they come, this antagonist is the product of a scientist's subconscious, no doubt inspired by *Forbidden Planet* (which in 1959 was still a recent film). The Destroyer is produced by a tiny spot in the scientist's brain, but once


SHOWCASE presents
GREEN LANTERN
YELLOW BEAMS FROM THAT MONSTER'S EYES... WEAKENING ME... MAKING ME POWERLESS TO RESIST...
featuring "The CREATURE THAT COULDN'T DIE!"
© 1986 DC COMICS

Green Lantern destroys the Destroyer, the spot in Dr. Phillips' brain disappears as well. What causes the thing's creation is not explained, but then these early issues tend to go for quick, fantastic action.

The third *Showcase* tryout, issue 24, features a standard superhero vs. monster cover. The first of the two stories is another espionage tale while the second is in the *Strange Adventures* vein—the monster on the loose, which was inadvertantly created by scientists experimenting with cosmic rays, is in reality just trying to control its own rapid growth. When GL cuts it off from further contact with the radiation, it thanks him for saving it from itself as it dies.

These three tryout issues feature inauspicious tales pumped up by the colorful presence of the hero and fine art by Gil Kane. It is clear that just what GL is really all about still wasn't fixed in the mind of Julius Schwartz and his creative team. Other than his ring's weakness to the color yellow and the very basic premise established in his brief origin, GL isn't very much different from the Flash in these stories. Except that he can fly. In fact, in his four *Showcase* appearances, the Flash's adventures were much more fantastic and interesting than GL's. But that would change when the character received his own title.

OWN HIS OWN

Six months after the try-outs, *Green Lan-*

GREEN LANTERN MEETS GREEN LANTERN
in "WORLD OF LIVING PHANTOMS"
GREEN LANTERN
STILL 10¢
GREEN LANTERN XUDAR OF THE PLANET XUDAR CALLING GREEN LANTERN OF EARTH... NEED YOUR HELP TO OVERCOME GIGANTIC MENACE... HURRY!... HURRY!...
PFLEPHAULE, IN A SECLUDED SPOT AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL...
IN BRIGHTEST DAY, IN BLACKEST NIGHT, NO EVIL SHALL ESCAPE MY SIGHT!
LET THOSE WHO WORSHIP EVIL'S MIGHT, BEWARE MY POWER... GREEN LANTERN'S LIGHT!

© 1985 DC COMICS

THE OATH

When charging his ring, Green Lantern recites a sacred oath:

In Brightest day . . . In Blackest night,
No evil shall escape my sight!
Let those who worship evil's might,
Beware my power—GREEN LANTERN'S LIGHT!

Besides being a solemn pledge, one can assume that Hal Jordan must charge the ring for a certain number of seconds—the time it takes to recite the oath. The vow was apparently made up by Hal, as he is seen charging the ring in silence in the final panel of "SOS Green Lantern" (*SHOWCASE* #22). But in the second story in that issue, "Secret of the Flaming Spear," he uses the now-familiar pledge for the first time, and without any reference as to the couplet's origin.

tern #1 appeared with one of the least interesting covers of the series. It featured the hero confronting a giant puppet. The lead story, "The Planet of Doomed Men," continued with Gil Kane as the regular penciller and featured Murphy Anderson's inks. Inking chores would usually go to Joe Giella and later Sid Greene. This story introduces the Guardians, the alien beings who govern the Green Lantern Corps. This episode also features the origin recap, which alters the *Showcase* version by having Abin Sur's ring search the entire world for a deserving one before choosing Hal Jordan, which makes him an unusual individual. After the Guardians decide that Jordan is indeed a good choice, they return him to Earth but remove all memory of them from his mind for reasons left unclear. He then goes off and saves another primitive alien race from a monster. The second story pits GL against a villainous superscientist, with predictable results.

Issue 2 introduces the anti-matter universe of Qward, much in evidence recently in the *Crisis* series. The Weaponers of Qward want to steal the GL power batteries from our universe. This issue also introduces Thomas Kalmaku, Hal Jordan's assistant, who is of Eskimo extraction and bears the unfortunate nickname "Pieface." He's Jordan's confidant and knows of his alter-ego. Pieface utters such exclamations as "Great fish-hooks!" to an embarrassing degree. In the Seventies, the character retired from the strip with dignity, certainly more dignity than he was portrayed with in these early stories. He would return again, though.

GL #3 follows up on the Qward characters when they steal the hero's power battery through a clever scam. They know that the space policeman is involved with Ferris Aircraft, so they create an illusion of the company's airfield which GL mistakes for the real thing. When he goes to charge his power ring in the hangar where he keeps it hidden under a shield of invisibility, they then know where to find it at the real Ferris complex. GL pursues the battery to Qward, where he just manages to retrieve it before his 24 hours of power run out.

These early issues of *Green Lantern* are the epitome of what fans like about Silver Age superhero comics. The characters are straightforward and uncomplicated, and the plots hinge on a clever gimmick or device. The artwork is clean and slick with a style of coloration much more interesting than that found in most comics today.

This is not to say that this early 60s style is better than today's on the whole. The lack of genuine human characterization in the stories has a distancing effect. They may be fun, but a reader doesn't become emotionally involved. There is a certain flair and style to these old comics, though, that counterbalances the inevitable sameness of the more prosaic adventures in which GL battles ordinary, plainclothes crooks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

FUN & PROFIT

BY MIKE BENTON

HOT COMICS & COLD CASH

"I tell you, every month I figure I miss out on making an extra $3,000," the manager of a comic book distributor's warehouse told me.

"I mean, look at all those cases of this month's new comics," he said. "Somewhere in those 150 titles is a real winner. Now you buy one of those cases for about $100 to $150—that's 300 issues at wholesale prices. You pick the right title, and three years later you're selling each comic for $10 a pop."

I asked him why he didn't do just that.

"You got a crystal ball? I tried with that RONIN book a couple years ago. You know, Frank Miller was hot as the Fourth of July then. His DAREDEVIL issues were selling for $4 to $8 each. So I bought three cases of RONIN #1—cost me nearly $1,000."

"And?" I prompted him.

"Still got 800 left. You need one?"

Like most collectors, you probably buy comics for reading pleasure. Yet just like the comic book distributor above, you're also looking for some "good deals"—the new "hot" comic books that will put extra money in your pocket.

Maybe you buy new comics for investment purposes, or perhaps you want to get some recent back issues before their prices take off. No matter. It makes good sense to be able to spot the new comics that will soon become collectible or "hot" comics.

So how do you recognize the winners from the losers, the turkeys from the eagles, the trash from the treasure? Every month nearly 200 comic books and related new comic items appear. Here are some rules to follow if you're looking to make cold cash from hot comics:

RULE #1: Beware of #1 Issues!

Everybody knows the first issue of a comic book is usually the most valuable one, so everybody buys a lot of #1 copies. The overall effect is that there is a surplus of first issues for a long time.

Think about it: first issues of comic books were originally considered to be the most valuable because they were somewhat more scarce than the later issues. Twenty or more years ago, not very many people wanted to try an unknown title. They might wait until the fourth or fifth issue before they started to buy it.

Publishers, too, were somewhat cautious about printing a large number of copies for an unproven comic book. Today, publishers rush around trying to print as many copies of #1 *anything* just because they know collectors stockpile all #1 issues almost indiscriminately.

You want to know why miniseries in comics became so popular? Simple. You can come out with a new series and a new #1 issue almost every month. Collectors buy them up on cue.

So in today's comic collecting world, you will always have a large supply of #1 issues. Publishers print large amounts, and then collectors and speculators hoard large amounts.

Remember now that supply and demand determine the cost of any collectible. In the case of new #1 issues, not only is there a sufficient supply, but the eventual demand for them may be much weaker than anyone suspects. Here's why:

The first issue of any comic is usually the most likely to be reprinted—look at STAR WARS and G.I. JOE; both #1 issues were almost instant reprints. Reprints decrease collector demand for the originals.

Also, many number one issues today are also for planned (or sometimes unplanned) short-run series. The "miniseries" has a built-in obsolescence for #1 issues. How

Neither first issues nor limited series are good investments.

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many people are going to want to collect a miniseries that has been defunct for three or more years? How many collectors will want the #1 issue of SECRET WARS or CRISIS four or five years from now?

So if a new comic series is widly successful, the #1 issue will eventually (or immediately) be reprinted. If it's a minor or unsuccessful title, then probably no one but a completist will even care to buy the first (or any) issue.

There really is too large a supply and too little potential long-lived demand for most of the #1 issues being published today.

If you're smart enough and quick enough, you can indeed make money on some of the new #1 issues in the short-run. Just be careful you don't load up on any and all first issues; your money would be better spent elsewhere.

RULE #2: Buy Significant Issues of Popular Titles

Let's look at a listing of some of the hot and relatively new comics:

X-MEN #94
SWAMP THING #20
HULK #183
DAREDEVIL #158
THOR #337
AVENGERS #100
SPIDERMAN #121

The first thing you should notice is that there are *no* #1 issues on this list. There is little to indicate that any of the above issues would have collector significance—and that's exactly why they are valuable!

At the time these books were published, collectors and speculators did not correctly predict the demand for them. No one knew that the Wolverine who made his first major appearance in HULK #183 would eventually become the most popular Marvel character among collectors.

Few people could anticipate the excitement that the first Alan Moore issue of *Swamp Thing* (20) would eventually generate. I certainly didn't know in June

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STRIP TEASE

BY RON GOULART

In the summer of 1934, a few days short of his 25th birthday, Alfred Gerald Caplin became Al Capp. As Caplin he'd been a struggling art student, an unsuccessful cartoonist in the Associated Press bullpen and an underpaid ghost on a top-selling comic strip. As Capp he became rich and famous.

He'd assumed his new identity to write and draw *Li'l Abner*. Syndicated by United Features, the fledgling comic strip made its debut in a slim list of just eight newspapers around the country. It began to catch on, though, and by the end of the decade was outselling all other United strips—including *Tarzan, The Captain and the Kids, Ella Cinders* and *Nancy*—and appearing in nearly 400 papers. Capp's salary had by that time risen impressively from the humble $50 it had been in 1934 and he was well on his way to becoming a national celebrity.

In the Forties *Li'l Abner* continued to forge ahead toward its eventual peak circulation of 900 papers around the world and Capp found himself being hailed not only as a brilliant artist but as the greatest satirist since Swift, Voltaire and Mark Twain. There were *Li'l Abner* comic books, *Li'l Abner* Big Little Books, a *Li'l Abner* movie and even lucrative *Li'l Abner* advertising strips. Despite all this conspicuous success in the 1930s and 1940s, few other syndicates made any attempt to imitate *Li'l Abner* and few cartoonists tried to ape Capp's style. The reason for this may have been that Capp was simply inimitable and that in order to create another *Li'l Abner* you needed another Capp. And Al Capp, flaws and all, was one of a kind.

Capp was born in New Haven, Connecticut on September 28, 1909. "My mother and father had been brought to this country when they were infants," he once said. "Their fathers had found that the great promise of America was true—it was no crime to be a Jew." No crime, but not as advantageous, Capp felt, as being a gentile. He remembered his early years as a period of struggle and lack of enough to eat. "In my real childhood the hunger was painful," he recalled near the end of his life. "In *Li'l Abner* it was hilarious." When he was nine, he was run over by a trolley car and lost his left leg. The youthful Capp vowed the accident would make no difference, but it obviously did. It curtailed his participation in sports, meant he couldn't dance—things that seemed vitally important in his teenage years. "I looked for other diversions," he said. "I wonder if it wasn't because of the wooden leg, slowing me down, that I had patience to study art." He also had time to read, favoring such humorous novelists as Dickens, Smollet, Mark Twain and Booth Tarkington.

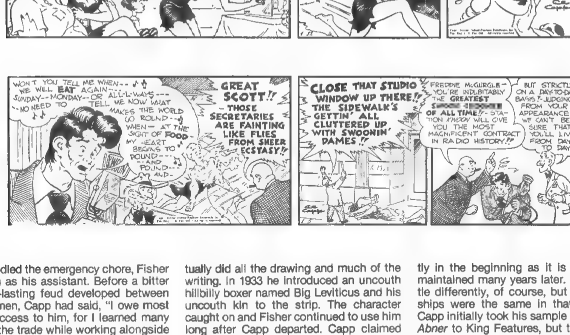
LI'L ABNER
AH HAS A SOB IS GONE THROUGH A HUNDRED AN NINE TESTS T'DAY!- AN IS GROGGY?!
SMALL WONDER!
Fools Rush In—
THE MASKED MANGLER
WORLD'S MOST INHUMAN WRESTLER
WILL MEET ALL COMERS
THANK HEVVINS AH KIN NOW GIT SOME REST
UH-HMM
PAPPY! -WHUT IS YO' STARIN' AT?!
TO-NITE AT THE PEARLY GATES ARENA
By AL CAPP
THE MASKED MANGLER
AH R-REELIZES AH IS A PR-PRONOUNCIN' MAH OWN DOOM WHEN AH SAYS THIS B-BUT THEY PHIZEEK-
-IT MIGHT BE IT!?
LE'S GO!?
OH-PORE LI'L PAPPY!
AND NOW HAVING HOPELESSLY CRIPPLED HIS REGULAR OPPONENT OF THE EVENING-THE "MASKED MANGLER" IS READY TO TAKE ON ANYONE FROM THE AUDIENCE!? - BUT(HOW) I SUPPOSE-AS USUAL- NOBODY WILL BE FOOL ENOUGH TO VOLUN-TEER!?
AH IS FOOL ENUFF T'VOLUNTEER IN NAME OF YOKUM!?
PSST! REMEMBER MAH INSTRUCK-TIONS - SON!?
Copyright 1940 by United Feature Syndicate, Inc.
Tm. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

After dropping out of a couple of art schools, Capp managed to land a job with the Associated Press in New York City. That was in 1932 and he drew a daily panel entitled *Mister Gilfeather*. Gilfeather was a pale imitation of the much more successful Major Hoople of *Our Boarding House* and young Capp's less than first-rate artwork did little to enhance the feature. He left the job a few months later, agreeing with one of the client editors who'd complained to the AP that the panel was "by far the worst in the country." Some months later he met Ham Fisher and that changed Capp's life for good and all. The panel, meantime, was taken over by Milton Caniff.

The story of how Capp and Fisher met was recounted several times over the years by both men. Initially Capp said he'd been walking along a Manhattan street when an expensive auto pulled up beside him and a prosperous gentleman in the back seat inquired if the portfolio under Capp's arm contained drawings. When Capp replied in the affirmative, Fisher invited him over to his studio to help him finish an overdue *Joe Palooka* Sunday page. Liking the way

SO THEY GONNA TAKE THIS VASE WIF YO IM UH-AN SEAL IT IN A TOMB IN INDIA FO 300 YEARS? TOO BAD! HOHUH! RAISS OUT OUR HEY, AN WE GO HOME??
YOU'LL NEVAH GIT THET HEY OUT UNLESS YO GITS HE OUT WIF IT!!
HE SWALLERED IT!!
NOW WE GIT HIM OUT TOY HIM GET SO RUMPS EATIN' BURN'D FAT WE NO CAN PULL IT OUT!
AH'LL GIT HIM OUT AWRIGHT!! STAN BACK!
WHACK!!
SHE NO BREAK, JOE??
DON'T FEAR PARRY,!! AH'LL GIT YO SAFELY OUTA THET VASE, YES? AH—A BRAP YOU IN TH' TWENTY-SECOND-STORY WINDER!!—TH' VASE'LL BREAK, NATCH-ERLY—AN YOU'LL BE FREE.!!

AS THE SWOON CROON OF FREDDIE McGURGLE VIBRATES OVER THE AIRWAVES—ALL RED-BLOODED AMERICAN GIRLHOOD—EVEN IN DOGPATCH—GATHERS AROUND THE RADIO
AH DONE HEERD CITY GALS PAINT LIKE FLIES AT THET VARNISH CHN-NNOOSIC?
SHECKS—THEM CITY GALS PAINT'S AT ANYTHING DOORKICH GAL IS TOUCH 'N' RUGGED—AH CHEWY WILL LEAVE US CLEAN!!
SHOOSH! AH'AR HE GO??
HALP!!—EV'RY GAL IN THAR DONE FAINTED DAID AWAY!!
EVERY GAL, BUT M-HE—T—T—K-KIN IT BE THET AH IS A BIT ABNORMAL?


WON'T YOU TELL ME WHEN—AH WILL EAT AGAIN—SUNDAY—MONDAY—OR ALL-ALWAYS—NO NEED TO TELL ME NOW WHAT MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND—WHEN—AT THE SIGHT OF FOOD MY HEART BEGINS TO POUND—POUND—POUND—AND—
GREAT SCOTT!! THOSE SECRETARIES ARE FAINTING LIKE FLIES FROM SHEER ECSTASY!!
CLOSE THAT STUDIO WINDOW UP THERE!! YOU'RE INDUSTRIALLY THE GREATEST SWOON CROONER OF ALL TIME?—STATION ENOSH WILL GIVE YOU THE MOST MAGNIFICENT CONTRACT IN RADIO HISTORY!!
FREDDIE McGURGLE—THE SIDEWALK'S GETTIN' ALL CLUTTERED UP WITH SWOONIN' DAMES!!
BUT STRICTLY ON A DAYTODAY BASIS!—KIDDING YOU! YOUR APPEARANCE WE CAN'T BE SURE THAT YOU'LL LIVE FROM DAY TO DAY!!

Capp handled the emergency chore, Fisher hired him as his assistant. Before a bitter and long-lasting feud developed between the two men, Capp had said, "I owe most of my success to him, for I learned many tricks of the trade while working alongside of him." In later years Capp modified his views. "I regard him as a leper," he said when alluding to Fisher in an article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, "a veritable goldmine of swinishness." He even implied that Fisher's fancy car, at their initial meeting, had almost run him over.

Be that as it may, it was while working on *Joe Palooka* that Capp first began exploring the possibilities of using hillbilly characters in a comic strip. Being Ham Fisher's assistant meant that Capp actually did all the drawing and much of the writing. In 1933 he introduced an uncouth hillbilly boxer named Big Leviticus and his uncouth kin to the strip. The character caught on and Fisher continued to use him long after Capp departed. Capp claimed he'd been thinking about some sort of rural characters ever since he'd made a trip to the South some years before. With Leviticus he took his first crack at a character who spoke the kind of stylized hillbilly lingo that would fill *Li'l Abner*—"Ah heard yo wuz heah, so ah come up . . . knowed yo wuz headed thisaway!"

Dreaming of a larger salary and less swinish work conditions, Capp began doing samples of a strip of his own, one devoted entirely to hillbillies. "It was exactly in the beginning as it is now," Capp maintained many years later. "Drawn a little differently, of course, but the relationships were the same in that first year." Capp initially took his sample weeks of *Li'l Abner* to King Features, but they dragged their feet and kept making suggestions for changes. The impatient Capp hustled the strip over to Monte Bourjaily at United Features and, according to Capp, both the syndicate editor and the sales staff "were amazed by it and wanted to take it out just as it was." The starting salary was nothing near what King might have offered, but "I was able to do my strip exactly as I wanted to." The first daily appeared in August, 1934 and Capp was on his way to fame and fortune.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

LOOKING BACK ON THE GOLDEN AGE

By Ron Goulart

PART II

That Thadeus Bodog Sivana was a world class villain was confirmed in *Whiz* #14 (March, 1941). In that issue he is sentenced to "77 consecutive prison terms, totaling 9,000 years, at hard labor" as "punishment for your innumerable crimes." Anybody who gets 9,000 years in the slammer has got to be impressively bad. Sivana, of course, never served a day of that time. Instead, he walked through the solid stone wall of the court house, using a trick he'd just worked out, and escaped. The very next month we learn that Sivana was not always the bald and twisted scoundrel we've come to know. Once "in the early part of the century, Sivana was one of the most brilliant and promising young scientists in Europe."

He had a full head of hair, parted in the middle. Ahead of his time, Sivana was scorned and ridiculed by his colleagues, "who called his dreams impractical and science a fake." Bitter and nearly broke, he took his small son and daughter and rocketed to Venus in a ship of his own invention. There he remained for years until he was ready to return to Earth—"his once magnificent mind warped with dreadful schemes for revenge on a world that would have none of him."

Without a doubt, *the* woman in Captain Marvel's life was Beautia, erstwhile empress of Venus and daughter of the wicked Sivana. A blonde of movie star magnitude, she possesses a beauty that "affects every man who sees her like a powerful drug." Not even Captain Marvel was immune and when he first encounters her, during his fateful first jaunt up to Venus, we're told "Beautia's sinister beauty affects Capt. Marvel like a powerful drug." Her nasty little father, bringing her back to Earth for his evil ends, intends to utilize her beauty. He enters her in a bathing beauty-contest and when she wins that, he next, displaying an impressive understanding of American politics, runs her for President of the USA. He intends, once she's in office, that "you will rule the United States not as President, but as a true queen!" Despite her genetic code and the fact she grew up on Venus as ruler of a race of giant frogs, Beautia is basically a nice person. She goes along with Sivana's evil schemes reluctantly and out of a misguided sense of daughterly duty. Meeting Captain Marvel has an effect on her and after their first encounter she leaves him a note reading, "In spite of everything I think you're marvelous. You and I will meet again. This tender missive

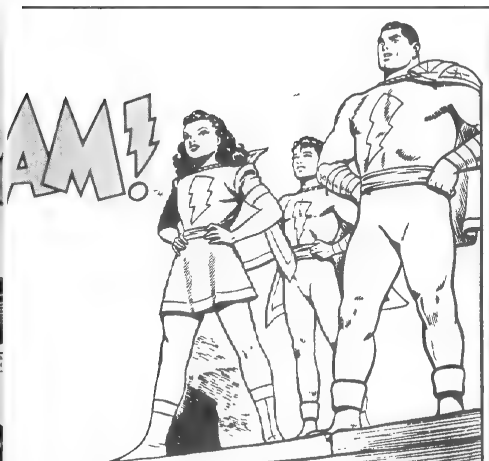
1965 DC COMICS
SHAZ
Capt. MARVEL
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN N PLACE OF THE USUAL NEWS PRO-GRAM WE TAKE YOU TO MUNICIPAL HALL FOR A SPECIAL BROADCAST.

causes the World's Mightiest Mortal to blush and perspire.

By *Whiz #15*, he's overcome his embarrassment and we find him, clad in a tuxedo, dropping in on Beautia at her apartment and saying, "I thought you might like to step out a bit this evening." She would and they go out to a fancy night spot. At the end of this particular episode Sivana, Beautia and a husky blond lad named Mafificus, son of the evil scientist, are left marooned on Venus. Sivana and his blond daughter eventually return. The romance doesn't exactly blossom and the relationship remains ambiguous. In one typical adventure the captain prevents Beautia from marrying while hypnotized. "Stronger than any hypnotic spell is Beautia's adoration for the mightiest of mortals," a caption informs us. When the grateful Beautia kisses him enthusiastically and exclaims, "My hero! My ideal!," all he does is gulp, "My gosh!" This L'il Abner behavior, unfortunately, persisted. More proof, perhaps, that the captain was still Billy Batson inside.

Billy acquired a romantic interest of his own in the spring of 1942, when Cissie Summerly began making intermittent appearances in the adventures. Cissie, drawn initially by Marc Swayze, was a pretty blond teenager, well-to-do and the niece of Billy's boss at Station WHIZ, Mr. Morris. She caused some conflicts between the young reporter and his other self, since Billy wanted to impress her in his own person yet continually had to resort to his Marvel mode to save her from the dire situations continually befalling her. Their relationship, essentially platonic, continued throughout the life of the feature.

During the early Forties another character, one who doesn't sit too well with later generations, was added. Steamboat, drawn in what was then a more or less acceptable way of depicting a Negro in cartoon style, was Billy's valet, traveling companion, sidekick and sharer of the secret of his alternate identity. He first showed up in *America's Greatest #2* (May 13, 1942) under the name Steamboat Bill, making a living as a hotdog vendor. He talked in movie



Black patois—"Lawsy me!", "Bust mah britches!", etc—and seems to have been inspired by Willie Best. Best, a giftec though now sometimes maligned Black comedy actor, appeared as Bob Hope's valet and sidekick in *Ghost Breakers* (1940) and *Nothing but the Truth* (1941). Steamboat wasn't featured in every adventure and he was eventually phased out of the saga.

The idea of Captain Marvel's leading a team finally got put to use in *Whiz* #21. This issue was dated September 5, 1941, since by this time, the increasingly popular title, which Cap shared with such stalwarts as Spy Smasher, Ibis the Invincible and the Golden Arrow, was coming out every four weeks. In a year that was not completely serious, nor exactly reverent to the basic concept, three other Billy Batsons show up—Tall Billy, Fat Billy and Hill Billy. Sivana and his confused minions kidnap them all plus Real Billy. In trying to help the authentic Billy, the others yell, "Shazam!" along with him. Four flashes of zigzag lightning follow and the entire quartet is transformed. Modest, the newcomers decided to be "kinda Second Lieutenant Marvels." The lieutenants returned from time to time, but were soon overshadowed by other new members of the Marvel clan. More serious, and exploitable, ones.

Four issues later, in *Whiz* #25, yet another addition was made to the Marvel family. After an encounter with the odious Captain Nazi—on leave from *Master Comics*—teenage Freddy Freeman is left near death. Billy decides to do something. ' Deep in a forgotten section of the subway, known only to Billy himself, the boy carries his unconscious burden aboard a weird vehicle," we are told. Soon, the two are face to face with Shazam, the wizard who provided Billy with his alter ego nearly two years earlier. Or rather with Shazam's ghost, since the bearded warlock expired after doing that earlier chore. Shazam works a switch on the original trick, fixing things so that Freddy will become a superhero by shouting, "Captain Marvel!"

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ARTIST & WRITERS

Charles Clarence Beck was nearly thirty when he began drawing Captain Marvel. His foursquare, appealing cartoon style had a great deal to do with the impressive success of the captain, although Beck maintains, "The stories were what put Marvel over, not the drawings." Those stories were produced initially by Bill Parker, who also, with some help from Beck, created Spy Smasher, Ibis and Bulletman. Otto Binder, an established pulp science fiction writer, joined the team during the second year. "My first *Captain Marvel Adventures* script was written in December, 1941 and appeared in the ninth issue, April, 1942," he once explained. "The end result of this, some twelve years later in 1953, was a total of 529 stories about the Big Red Cheese alone." Binder was responsible for just about all the adventures dealing with time travel, space travel and other SF staples. He also invented Mr. Tawny. Among the other scriptwriters were Joseph Millard, Rod Reed and Manley Wade Wellman, another pulp veteran.

The pulps also provided Beck with his first assistant. Pete Costanza had been a pulpwood illustrator before switching to comic books. "When Pete left his 'straight illustration,'" Beck has said, "he turned out to be a remarkably fine cartoonist with a great sense of humor." His hand is already evident during the first year of *Whiz*. While helping out on CM, Costanza also soloed on Golden Arrow and Ibis. As the demand for Marvel stories increased—the captain was appearing in *Whiz, Captain Marvel Adventures*, and *America's Greatest* in the early 1940s—Fawcett first went to outsiders and then had Beck set up a shop of his own. Among the outsiders were Jack Kirby who produced a somewhat hurried-looking first issue of *Captain Marvel Adventures*, and George Tuska, who drew all of CMA #s 2 and 3.

Employed in Beck's shop were such as Al Fagaly, Morris Weiss, Chic Stone, Kurt Schafenberger, Dave Derg, Al McClean and Marc Swayze. Swayze, who drew the debut adventures of Mary Marvel, also did the *Flyin' Jenny* newspaper strip at this same time.

Working as a team, Beck and Costanza produced *Captain Tootsie*, an ad strip for Tootsie Rolls that ran in comic books and newspapers. It was even less serious than Captain Marvel.

STAN LEE SOUNDS OFF

Greetings, frantic ones, from the hallowed halls of Marvel Productions, California's filmmaking arm of New York's Marvel Comics. (And if you can find a more convoluted sentence than that one, consider yourself no-prized!)

We may be just the arm of Marvel now, but the way things are going, we'll soon be the legs, hips, shoulders and belly button as well!

Didja know that this year Marvel Productions will produce more animated cartoons than any other studio in America? Not bad for a rash little upstart that was organized only a short time ago.

In future columns I'll be giving you lots of behind-the-scenes info about our snazzy little studio, including the creation of SOLARMAN, our latest new superhero. But right now we're gonna discuss a different subject, about which many readers have asked me to clue them in. Even your peerless publisher, Happy Hal Schuster, has suggested that I wax eloquent about this titanic topic.

So, without any further ado (mainly because I've used out all the ado I had left), leave us now see what advice we can give to all those hopeful heroes who have their hearts set on pursuing . . . A CAREER IN COMICBOOKS!

The first question that people inevitably ask is, what should they study to prepare them to become comicstrip artists, writers or what have you. The answer is awesome in its simplicity. Study the comicbooks themselves.

The best way to learn about any field is to steep yourself in it. Read as many comics as you can lay your hands on. Not just the ones you like best; read the ones you don't like, too. While you're reading them, study them. Try to figure out why you do like certain stories and certain artwork, and equally important, see if you can single out the reasons you don't like other stories and other artwork.

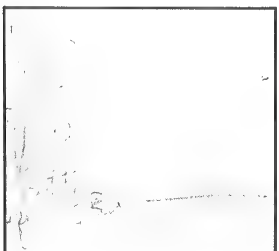
Remember this. It's not enough to say "I don't like that story because it bored me." Anyone can say that. The trick is to find out why it bored you. Was there too much dialogue? Was the dialogue too convoluted, too explanatory and not dramatic enough? Or was it too dramatic, so overly dramatic that it sounded corny? Was the dialogue unnatural-sounding? Was it hard for you to believe real flesh-and-blood people would actually speak that way? Were the drawings too monotonous? Were the scenes and set-ups not colorful enough? Was there not enough action, or too much action? Were the characters not drawn realistically enough, thus making the stories seem unbelievable?

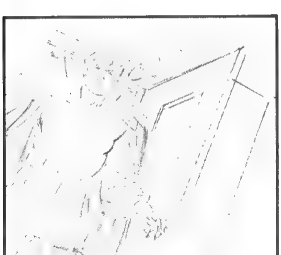
Even those points are just the tip of the iceberg. If you really want to learn comics, if you want to know them the way a pro knows them, you've got to be able to evaluate them, to criticize them and to recognize the pitfalls that can make a comicstrip fall flat on its face,; pitfalls that you yourself will have to avoid.

Here are some more things to look for.

Does the story catch your interest early on by presenting an exciting problem or danger for the lead character or characters? Does it continually build in suspense and drama, so that the reader will grow more absorbed by the incidents with each page he or she turns? Are there tantalizing sub-plots to occupy the reader whenever the main action slows down? (Action cannot continue steadily without losing its impact. Clever sub-plots can strengthen the slower portions of the story which link the action scenes).

As for the artwork, is the artist varying the angles from panel to panel as much as he should? Is the artist telling the story with clarity, or are many scenes too convoluted? Are there too many closeups, with not enough long-shots which serve to establish the locales and set the mood? Or, are there not enough closeups, not enough dramatic facial expressions which give the characters their personality and appeal?





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Remember, the more you understand the good points and bad points of a strip, the more qualified you'll become to work in that field, and the better will be your chances of doing a successful feature.

In the same vein, you should try to learn which comicbooks are the best sellers and which are the losers. This information can be found in the "Statement of Ownership" column which all publishers must print in their magazines every six months. These columns list the circulation of each mag. Therefore, all you need do is compare circulation figures to know which are the highs and which are the lows.

The reason you should become familiar with sales figures is the same reason filmmakers see both the most successful movies and the biggest bombs of the year. You've got to study both to know what makes 'em tick. Why did this movie (or magazine) do so well? Why did this magazine (or movie) die on the vine? When you reach the point where you think you can figure out those answers, you're halfway along the road toward being a pro.

Naturally, the other half involves creating your own stories and/or artwork. And here's where it gets heavy.

It's quite possible to have a feel for comics and still not be able to write them or draw them professionally yourself. Let's try to figure out why. What do you really need to make it in comics?

In order to become a top flight comic book writer or artist, you must first become a competent writer or artist. You'll notice I left out the word "comicbook" in that last sentence. That omission is very important.

Too many aspiring comicbook fanatics think that once they know comics, everything else will fall into place. Big mistake. Knowing the comicbooks is only Phase One. If you want to become a comicbook writer, you must first learn how to write. Notice again, I didn't say "learn how to write comics." I said learn how to write!

If you want to become a comicbook artist, you must first learn to be an artist. Once more, I didn't say "a comicbook artist." I said learn to be an artist!

I cannot stress how important this is. That's why I keep repeating it. The top

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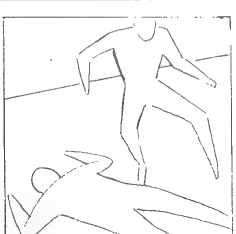


A VALUABLE TIP FROM HOW TO DRAW COMICS THE MARVEL WAY, BY LEE AND JOHN BUSCEMA.

writers in the comicbook field today are good writers, first and foremost. They've learned grammar, plotting, story structure, characterization, the elements of dialogue. They have the necessary skills to write novels, essays, screenplays. They're not just good comicbook writers. They're good writers!

The top artists in comics have already mastered anatomy, composition, perspective, figure drawing and layout. They are, first and foremost, good artists. In addition, they're also good comicbook artists.

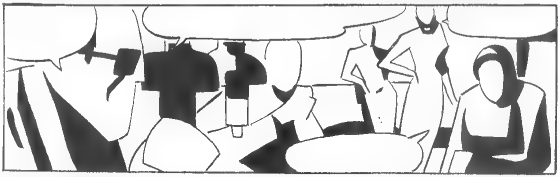
I'm sure you've figured out what comes next. Don't worry about finding a school that teaches comicbook writing and drawing. In the beginning, forget the word "comicbook." The most important thing is to find a school that has good courses in writing and/or illustration. Become a professional caliber writer or artist first. Otherwise, the odds are against you ever reaching your full potential in the highly competitive comicbook field.

Let's get back to the writer now. Once you've mastered the technique of writing, once you can honestly feel you are a good, professional quality writer, then—and only then—you begin to concentrate on comicbook writing. Now you're ready to get your foot in the door. Here's how.

The first thing I'd suggest is, contact (via phone or letter) the editor of the comicbook company of your choice. (See how impartial I'm trying to be!) Tell something of your background, and then ask if they

Never add blacks merely because you've got some extra ink in your pen or brush. Always have a definite reason—either to enhance the design of the panel, or to help clarify a complicated layout. Of equal importance, of course, is the use of black to emphasize a certain mood. And, speaking of mood . . .

WE'VE LEARNED ONE SMALL THING FROM THIS EXPERIENCE--
--SUN'S POWER IS BEYOND OUR STOPPING HIM PERHAPS BEYOND ANY AGENCY WITH WHICH WE COULD WORK
F DRACULA WERE ALIVE, HE'D BE ABLE TO WHAM
F DRACULA WERE ALIVE HE'D BE ABLE TO WHAM US, TOO



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are looking for any particular stories from new writers. If you get a favorable response, you'll probably be asked to submit some synopses and you'll be on your way.

Another method is to select a comicbook title which you honestly think is badly written and which isn't selling as well as it should. Then, write a few outlines for stories for that magazine, stories which you think are far better than the ones being printed. Send them in to the editor and keep your fingers crossed. There's always the chance he'll be happy to receive some new, clever ideas for a book which he knows is slipping.

As for the illustrators among you, once you feel your work is really of professional caliber, and is just what the comics are looking for, you have two choices. 1) Find a comicbook character which you think you can draw better than the present artist. Make up some sample pages and send them in to the editor. Or, 2) Create your own original character and send that one to the editor. Either way, he'll be able to judge your ability on the basis of what you've sent him. After that, it's in the lap of the Gods. Good luck.

Y'know, while I was penning these portentious words, a thought occurred to me. Why should I have to wrack my bewildered little brain thinking of subjects for this column? If I play my cards right, I can probably get you to do the work for me.

So here's my sneaky proposition. You do the brain-wracking. You figure out what you'd like me to write about. Then just drop me a note or a card in care of this mag, telling me what my future subjects should be. Every writer will be entitled to a practically priceless collector's item No-Prize, and yours truly will be able to get a few more hours sleep!

So, till we meet again, I'll be watching the mailbox for your Burgeoning little billet doux. In the meantime, if the Silver Surfer doesn't forget to have his skullcap simonized, I'll see you again next ish, same time, same place.

Excelsior!

CF

Stan

BREAKING IN

Can working in comic books be a valid and realistic career opportunity for an up and coming artist or writer? One can't make a living based on sheer enthusiasm alone, so does the form offer a reasonably well-paid future? The answer, according to Marvel Comics Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter and Art Director John Romita, is a resounding and enthusiastic yes!

But one also has to approach the form realistically. Just because comic books are a form of entertainment doesn't mean that serious effort isn't involved in creating them.

"If you think that this is going to be a romp through fantasyland, I'm here to tell you that, no, it is actually work," Shooter cautions. "You have to deal with reality and if you're not equipped to do that, then you'll never get anywhere. There's business and then there's what I consider the art, which is pure creation. That's where you do something and you don't care what the world thinks of it, you're just trying to express something and if a hundred years after you're dead they decide that you're an artist, that's fine. In between, there's someplace that's the field of commercial art or creative business. Creative business is what "artistes" look down their noses at. But I don't think that it's demeaning at all to reach an audience. I don't see anything inherently more noble about trying to create something to please yourself than there is in trying to create something to please an audience. Michelangelo was a commerical artist working for the Pope. The measure of the value of a work is the skill and the gift which was put into it."

Jim Shooter's background extends not only beyond Marvel Comics into DC, but back into the late Sixties. Doubtless he still holds the record for having been the youngest writer working professionaly in the medium.

AT MARVEL COMICS

HOW JIM SHOOTER BROKE IN

"My story is that when I was 13, my family needed money and when you're 13 years old, you can't get a job," Shooter recalls. "It occurred to me that the only thing a 13 year old kid could do to make money would be to make something and sell it.

"I'd given up reading comics when I was eight, but had recently come across some of these new-fangled Marvel Comics and found them more interesting. I looked at some of the old *Supermans* that I used to read and I thought that the Marvels were a lot better. I decided that if I studied these and learned to do what Marvel does, I could probably sell it to DC. So I wrote a script and drew it because I had no idea what a comic book script looked like. I tried to make it look as much like a comic book as I could, with crude little balloons, and sent it off to DC Comics. I got a nice polite letter back saying: "Dear Kid, send us another one.' So I sent them two more. Then I got a phone call and they offered to buy those three, and for me to work regularly from that point on. they didn't know how old I was.

"So I became a regular writer for DC Comics. As soon as I finished one story, I had another assignment waiting for me—for the next five years. I wrote almost all of the Legion of Superheroes stories for that period. I also wrote *Superman, World's Finest, Action Comics, Supergirl, Capt. Action*—everything but *Lois Lane*. Eventually, after working at DC for awhile, I got a job offer from Marvel.

"DC always considered me their Marvel writer, and they used to put me down by saying: 'Oh, you're our Marvel writer'," Shooter explains. "Then I was made an associate editor at Marvel and later they made me Editor-in-Chief, which I've been for eight years."

HOW TO SUBMIT

"The reason I tell my story," Shooter continues, "is because it's important to what we want to tell about the machinery that is availible now for people to get in. Because of my origin, I have a special fondness for things which come in the mail. We all look at submissions.

"To help people we published the try-out book, which sells for thirteen dollars. If you don't have thirteen bucks, borrow one and read it."

Romita adds that, "We recommend sending samples in by mail, even for those living in New York, because if we saw everybody in person we wouldn't have time to do anything else. Mail is the best bet and then when we see something that we think has struck it right we will definitely call up or send a note."

Some people go to very elaborate lengths in sendlng samples to Marvel, but in actuality, they are looking for quality rather than quantity.

"Give us the best possible thing to show us what your talent is. For writers, I prefer synopses of plots because that really separates the herd from the one or two who really know what a story is. If you make the first cut, you'll have plenty of opportunity to show us how brilliantly you write dialogue. It's a little bit easier to read a synopsis and from that we can figure out if people have a basic understanding of it. From there we can go on and give them a chance to go to the next step."

John Romita's tips for artist's submissions are specific and to the point. He and Shooter also have words of wisdom regarding common mistakes made in first submissions by prospective talent.

"For pencillers, the only thing that I'd like to see them do is not be too specific unless you really only want to do one thing," says Romita. "You expand your chances of getting hooked on to somebody if you put some variety in your samples. I prefer to see Xeroxes and not originals because I'm always afraid than an original will get damaged or lost. It doesn't need to be a lot of pages—it can be three or four—but within those pages you should show a wide variety. If you could show a little bit of sword & sorcery, a little bit of everyday street scenes. Interiors where you can show a character sitting on a sofa and make him fit in there like he's not floating in the air. Anything you can to show variety. If you're hoping to get work in the *Star Wars* vein but there's an opening

Penciling

A penciler does his work on art boards, guided by a story plot created by a writer. It is the basis for what he draws, though it doesn't tell him exactly what to draw. The next five story pages of this book are blank, except for the standard Marvel art board markings. The story plot for those pages appears on the following page for you to refer to as a professional penciler would. This simulates the actual working conditions professional Marvel Comics pencilers face.

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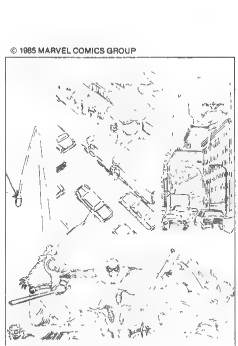


Tools and Technical Information:
A penciler tells in pictures the story outlined in the story plot. He has to imagine panels and panel sequences that will best dramatize the events described in the story plot, and then he has to draw them in pencil.

Pencilers generally use fairly ordinary **pencils**. Usually they prefer pencils with a rather hard lead (#2, H.B. or harder), which is less messy and easier on the inker. Some use mechanical pencils or special artists' pencils. Some (like the artist who penciled this book) even use erasable blue pencils. And, of course, they frequently use erasers. There are no rules about equipment—any erasable pencil you find comfortable is fine.

The Think:
Storytelling, absolutely, is the number one concern. The penciler's role is the key role in the chain of creative disciplines which are allied to make comics. True, the writer of the plot begins the creative process—he creates the story. But the penciler is the first to tell the story in the form the readers will eventually see. Storytelling is **conveying information**, and the penciler must do this well or the entire creative process will be built on a weak foundation. He is basically drawing a series of still shots which should make the story clear and understandable even before the words are added. He's creating, in effect, a silent movie, but in still pictures.

Generally speaking there are three basic kinds of shots: long shots, medium shots, and close ups. Though, of course, there are exceptions, each shot is generally good for conveying certain kinds of information, as described below:

1. **Long Shots**—also called "establishing shots." These are good for conveying setting or establishing a locale. They're also, of course, good for showing things or events of great magnitude.
2. **Medium Shots**—also called "action depth" shots. These show full figures or objects with no parts hidden cropped by the panel border. These shots are good for showing action. Most televised sporting events are shown almost entirely from this depth; for that reason. They're also good for giving an overall view of a person or object.
3. **Close-Ups**—These include any shots closer than action depth. If any part of the subject of the picture is cropped by the panel border, the picture is a close up. Generally close ups are used for faces or expressive gestures. They're good for showing reaction, emotion, and feelings—and also for showing what a character looks like facially, or for showing detail on an object.

Any shot you can imagine falls into one of these three broad categories. Figuring out what information is is necessary to convey in each panel and choosing the correct shot is one of the most important things a penciler does.

There are three other priorities for pencilers to keep in mind, though these are really part and parcel of storytelling:

1. **Drawing**. Good draftsmanship is very important. Accurate perspective, solid anatomy on the figures and good composition are essential. Realism is not essential, but "convincingness," again, is. Make your drawings believable. If you can draw a camel, car or whatever that looks convincing without using reference, fine. If not, get a photo of the item in question or study a real one until you can draw it believably. Use a ruler where it's needed.
2. **Drama**—Pace the story well. Try to let it flow in an interesting manner. You are the director and the characters you're drawing are your actors—move them through the story in a dramatic manner. Use lighting and angles for dramatic effect.
3. **Dynamics**—Because our pictures don't move, creating the illusion of movement within them is vital.

Look closely at the terrific penciling by John Romita, Jr. on pages 10-14, 17-18, and 21-25. By analyzing his approach, especially on pages 21-25 (the story plot for which appears on page 20), you'll be able to crystallize your own. Oh, and by the way, pages 6 and 9 of this book have been left blank, too, so you can get in some extra penciling practice.

Give it a try!

THE MARVEL COMICS TRY-OUT BOOK IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE HOPEFUL PROSPECTIVE COMIC BOOK ARTIST, WRITER, INKER, LETTERER OR COLORIST.

in *Daredevil* to do a fill-in, you'd just be cutting your own throat to only do science fiction and barbarian samples. So show as much versatility as possible."

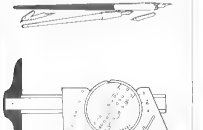
But what are the most common and yet easily avoidable mistakes to make in submitting? With 20,000 samples of all kinds just in the past year, the recurring mistakes are easily spotted.

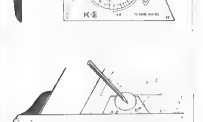
Romita explains, "I'm amazed by a lot of youngsters who come up with samples which seem to gravitate towards the strangest and most offbeat kind of work. The way Jim approached it was he looked at the Marvel books and saw that there was something different there and if he learned that lingo, rhythm and balance he could sell them stuff. That seems to me the most basic way to go to school—pick out the bestselling books and the books that appeal to you the most. Of course that's where we run into trouble. A lot of people are attracted by the damndest books I ever saw. I will ask the youngster to pick out the best page in that book and he gravitates toward the worst one. There's a personal taste thing here. It doesn't do you any good to learn techniques from a strange book that isn't selling to anyone. But if you were to look at Byrne's books and books which sell, like *The X-Men*, what you have to do is think in terms of whatever's good in those books and then add your own little twist or technique to it. If you have no other choice or school to go to, see what's selling and what's good about it. But be very clear—don't pick out little nuts and moles on characters that have nothing to do with it. Pick out the basic precepts of that book which are selling it and try to emulate them."

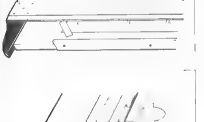
Jim Shooter's view on what is wrong with many submissions echoes what John Romita observes but also goes to the heart of what some fans tend to be impressed by.

"I think that what happens a lot of times is they like something and they look at it and may not even know why it works and gravitate towards whatever the most outstanding quality of it is. Neal Adams tells me that whenever someone comes up to him and shows him samples based on Neal's work, what he sees are

Lettering







Tools and Technical Information
The letterer inscribes the dialogue sound effects, captions and other copy (written by the scripter) directly onto the art pages where indicated by the scripter. The numbered lines of copy (dialogue, captions, etc.) on the script pages (see next page) correspond to the numbered rough indications for balloons, captions, etc. on the art pages. The letterer also draws the balloons and the borders around the panels.

Letterers use **India ink** or other indelible black inks, which are available in any art supply store and a wide variety of lettering or calligraphic pens. Being that lettering pen nibs are designed to give an even, consistent line, most letterers use several pens to achieve various thicknesses of lines. The pen nibs most commonly used include the **Speedball** A-5, PB-6, B-6 and B-7, and the **Hunt** #.07 crowquill, all of which fit in standard or crowquill holders. However, there are no rules about equipment: any instrument which can be employed to create the desired quality of lettering is fine.

To rule guidelines for hand lettering, a letterer generally uses a **T-square** and a device called an **Ames guide**. The Ames guide, positioned on the paper and resting on the edge of the blade of the T-square enables the letterer to quickly rule a set of guidelines by placing the point of a pencil in the measured holes of the Ames guide and sliding it back and forth (as shown).

Comics letterers usually set their Ames guides on "3" to make guidelines with proper spacing (about ⅛") for the actual letters, allowing a smaller space (about ¼") between lines.

It is, of course, possible to rule guidelines using an ordinary ruler. It just takes a little longer.

In order for the lettering to be neat and even, the guidelines, of course, must be done with care. They should be straight and square to the page.

The Goal
Storytelling, as always, is the goal. A letterer can contribute by making the copy neat, legible, evenly spaced, and mistake free. Balloons should be smooth and unobtrusive. Balloon pointers should be straight and directed toward the mouths of the intended speakers. Sound effects and other types of large "display" lettering are extremely important – and they offer the letterer his best opportunity to be creative. If you study the superb job done by Marvel Comics letterer Jim Novak on the preceding pages, you'll pick up a lot of the fine points of comics lettering. Every comics letterer, of course, has idiosyncrasies of style, but generally speaking, the style should be unobtrusive – the best lettering is the least noticed!

Allowing for slight stylistic variations, the more your work looks like Jim's, the better it is.

Give it a try!

NO, KIP--IT'S ME. PAINTED TO COMMEMORATE MY VICTORY OVER THE ARQUIAN CONFEDERACY.
SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, SANDY?
Huh? Oh...ah NO, MAJESTY, IT'S ah, HELLSTEETH, YES!
I FEEL LIKE A MARK IN THIS OUTFIT, G! ME A TUNIC AN PANTS AN SOME POCKETS TO PICK. THEN I'LL BE HAPPY.

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broken window panels, big rubbery hands coming out towards the reader and all the stuff that Neal's embarrassed about today. But people would look at that stuff and that would stand out to them. They really like his work and assume that this must be good because they like this art and it's got big rubbery hands.

"If you ask Neal what he's trying to do when he draws comics," Shooter continues, "he says almost the same thing that I'm saying. 'Well, look, we're here to tell a story.' Look at his current work. It's very straightforward, strong and graphic. It's beautifully drawn and all of the good things that you liked back in the old books. He just got rid of the dumb things. That syndrome occurs a lot. Because they don't have the foundation of knowledge to judge things, they gravitate towards the most outstanding factor, even if it's something that irritates them if they really stop and think about it."

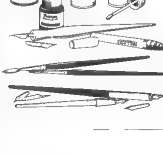
THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Marvel has what might be termed a basic entry level program for artists whose work passes muster but who still need some experience before they can take on the responsibilities of drawing an established title.

"It's naturally a limited program," Romita explains, "because it really demands a commitment from the youngster. Of necessity it has to be somebody who has attained a certain level of proficiency. It is not to train novices. It's to give a guy a push after he's maybe hit a snag but could get over that hump with a few tips from some of the editors and whoever sees the work. Every editor sees the work because the apprenticeship program is predicated on the fact that daily, 9 to 5, these youngsters do some corrections under my direction. If a character is missing from a panel we put a character in and we sometimes move balloons if we have to finish the background. So there are a lot of little things in the final stages of a book where we need help and that help must be of a certain level, quality and ability to simulate and match a technique.

Inking

An inker does his work on original comics art pages which are entirely finished except for the inking (and coloring, but remember: coloring is done on copies.) The next five story pages of this book are penciled, scripted and lettered, but left unInked, to simulate the actual working conditions professional Marvel Comics inkers face.



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Tools and Technical Information:
The inker literally redraws the penciler's work in ink, right on top of the original pencil lines, thus making the drawing darker, sharper and less smudgy - and thereby more suitable for printing.

Inkers generally use **India ink** or other indelible black inks, which are available in any art supply store. Inkers also use various forms of opaque white paint such as **Pro-White** or **Bno-pake** for corrections and occasionally for special effects. These are also available at art supply stores, as well as some stationery stores. Inkers apply ink over the penciled art using a wide variety of pens and brushes. The brushes used are usually fine point. **Winsor Newton brushes** size #2 or #3. The pens used are usually artists' drawing pens with flexible nibs. Often, fine pointed pens called 'crowquills' are used. But, there are no rules about equipment - any instrument which puts the ink on the paper and creates the desired effect is fine. In fact, just about anything which puts black or white lines or dots on paper can be used as an inking tool - including thumbs, forks, rag-a-tone, sponges, you name it. For the moment though, let's stick with the basics.

The Goal:
As previously stated in the introduction to coloring, the primary purpose of all of the individual creative processes that go into comics is storytelling - conveying the story in the best, most effective way.

How can an inker, who is only finishing and embellishing the penciler's work, contribute to storytelling? The inker can't alter the dialogue, and must work with the drawings provided by the penciler - but he or she can follow these priorities.

1. **Clarity**—Make each panel clear and ready to interpret visually. Make it easy for a reader to tell just what he's looking at. Work to polish and clarify what the penciler has drawn.

2. **Depth**. The inker is in complete control of all values, meaning how light or dark something is. Careful placement of spotting, or black areas, can greatly add more illusion of depth. Thickness of the outlines is another key factor. Creating depth is extremely important. It can't be overstated. Ignoring large dark areas - come forward and large open or white areas fade back. As with coloring, however, there are no hard and fast rules - it's a bit different for each panel.

3. **"Convincingness"**. For an inker this is, of course, this means creating mood effect and the illusion of reality. Again, photograph, cinematic or totally possible or even fantastically destructive. What matters is giving your work a convincing feel. Inkers can do this by using techniques which make no reference to it - and flat others by - a flat metal, some like metal hair, some like hair, glass, etc., to glass, etc. By carefully examining the original line work of Inker Alan Milgrom on the preceding pages you'll be able to see examples of such techniques. You'll learn a lot about the craft in general.

Give it a try!

"Following the process which we go through, which is from 3 to 6 months, they should be able to get work and be launched on a career. We have a minimum wage arrangement in the program which is $4.25 an hour, so it isn't a way to get rich."

But it is a good way to get into comics. The program is a limited, temporary staff position which employs only three people at a time, who are then replaced with the next group of apprentices.

COMICS AS A VALID CAREER

But how much work is available in the comic book field today?

"If a hundred Inkers showed up tomorrow it would be unlikely that we would be able to employ them all immediately," Shooter states, "but it's very likely that in awhile, in a year or so, that they would all be working.

"We're enjoying the luxury of a boom in comics—an incredible expansion that's just great and I think that there will be more and more positions opening up. But the competition will be fierce and you will have to be better and better. Thirteen year old Jimmy Shooter couldn't get in today. The competition is much fiercer than it was back then. I happened to hit it at the right time and place. They hadn't had anybody new come into the field for a long time and needed some writers. Then here came this kid that they thought they could train. Now there are hundreds of people beating on the doors and so you've got to be real good. And yes, cold, cruel world that it is, some new Inker is going to get work while Joe Smoot, who used to be just marginal, isn't going to get work any more. But I think that the luxury of the situation is that we're expanding at such a rate that that isn't going to happen very often."

Not to overlook other aspects of creating a strip, there are also special ways that letterers, Inkers and colorists should submit samples to achieve the maximum effect.

"For lettering," says Shooter, "just fill up some sheets with letters, sound effects and such and that will show us whether or not we're in the ball park.

"For Inking, you need to find something to Ink, which is one of the reasons we made the *Marvel Try-Out Book*.

"Coloring is a bit harder," Shooter continues, "because it's such a weird little skill and engravers and printers are so strict. We do a lot of color on offset, camera-separated and such. But generally speaking, the people who get to do those are either the artists themselves or people who have proven themselves for years in regular color comics. So coloring is very difficult. But once again there's the *Try-Out* book or a Xerox or any black and white comic book page, all of which you can color with anything you want to. What you're trying to demonstrate is your color sense, show me that you can create depth with color, make things clear, dramatic, and convincing (although not realistic). If you prove that with your first samples, we'll

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

LETTERS

Send all comments and correspondence to:
COMICS FEATURE
8399 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Suite 210
Canoga Park, CA 91304

Dear Sir,

I would like to congratulate you for the excellence of your magazine.

I have recently taken to collecting comics, some years after I gave them up. I now have an extensive collection of Marvel and D.C. comics from the 1970's. These comic books were bought from a 'speciality supply' store. We have these stores in England just as you have them in America.

I was pleased to discover many of the artists and writers working in the comic industry were the same artists and writers whose work I read and enjoyed during my school days. I was especially pleased to read interviews with these artists and writers in *Comics Feature* magazine. I try to get as many copies of *Comics Feature* as I can. I have almost all of them and I never fail to obtain the new editions when they are on sale.

I would like to quote Don Heck who said, "People in Europe accept comics as art and the people who work on them as artists." Don Heck is quite right.

Bill Tidy, one of Britain's most popular illustrators, has appeared on British television many times. He has drawn ink pictures, both humorous and satirical, directly in front of the television cameras before an admiring studio audience and television viewers.

Britain's illustrators are famous and well respected.

Just a few days ago, Frank Hampson, the creator and illustrator of Dan Dare, passed away. The event was reported on television and in the newspapers. Dan Dare, the space pilot of the future, appeared in *The Eagle*, a weekly British comic book. Frank Hampson received praise in his lifetime as a "brilliant artist." The Dan Dare story pages were shown on the television screens and sequences from the stories were published in newspapers as a tribute to him. Frank Hampson was respected and will be missed.

My original collection of comics is gone. I 'parted company' with them when I left school. My new new collection of comics includes the 'new titles' which were published after I had stopped collecting comics, the 'goodies' I had missed. I also resumed my interest in the titles I used to read in the school days. I'm glad they're still in business and I hope they always will be. It was fun to rediscover the favourites of my early collection.

I am now familiar with the 'new crowd,' and I don't just mean the new heroes, I also mean the new people whose work now appears in the comics of today. There is much to appreciate in the interviews published in *Comics Feature*. I found the interviews with these newcomers particularly illuminating.

You have asked for comments on your magazine.

1) Please don't under-estimate your readers by simplifying the articles, the publishers picks or any of the buying guides. *Comics Feature* readers are not morons.

2) The failure of your Conan issue is easily explained: People who read super-hero stories do not admire naked primitive savages with knives. If your magazine had a letters page, your readers would have told you this themselves.

3) I noticed issue one of *Comics Feature* was edited by Dean Mullaney. The magazine has had several editors since 1980. Dean Mullaney invited readers to write to him at the editorial office. Nothing was seen or heard of those letters. I would like to make a polite request, please print your readers letters.

4) I wouldn't like to see too many changes in *Comics Feature*. Changes in the magazine could damage its popularity.

5) I am an enthusiastic reader of *Comics Feature*, and I keep all the editions I have bought. I'll continue to read *Comics Feature*. Please keep up the good work. I thank you and your writing staff, I'm sure all the other readers thank you as well.

Mr. D. Murphy
Liverpool 21,
Lancashire,
England

It is always fun to hear from someone who abandoned comics at a younger age then later rediscovered their joys. Welcome back! You are quite right, of course, that comic books and comic art have much more widespread acceptance in Europe and the UK than here in the States. There they are considered art. The same was once true of jazz, "hard-boiled" detective fiction and even certain actors—Bronson, Eastwood.

You warn against changes in Comics Feature, *but I do hope that you will find the addition of Stan Lee and Mike Benton and the lower cover price to be pleasing exceptions. While we will not tamper with the essence of our mag we must keep growing in healthy ways so that we do not become stale.*

Your only complaint—that we do not run a letters section—is one that I find troublesome. We do want to run one! It's just that we don't get many letters. Consider this another request to all readers.

Dear Editor

my name is dany and I have been collecting a couple of your Comic Feature Specials, and seeing you know so much about comics, I would very much appreciate it if you would send me some information on how you get involved in comics and especially into comic art.

I'm 14 years of age and very eager to be a comic artist. I think your Comics Feature books are excellent and your report on Stan Lee was great! I will continue school, leave and take a course in drawing. An important question that always enters my mind is "Is comic art secure for future benefits?"

I hope you can send me some information on Comic art and answer my questions.

Yours Faithfully,
Danny Williams
14 Plummer Rd. Mentore
3194, Victoria, Australia

The information in this issue should be just what you're looking for. And since it comes from Stan Lee, Jim Shooter and John Romita, I don't think you could ask for better service.

SILVER AGE

THE COSMIC ZAP

BY WILL JACOBS & GERARD JONES

The great cosmic outer-space adventure had been an integral part of the Marvel universe since 1965, but not until the coming of Jim Starlin did it assume the stature of a new genre. In the past science fiction comics had almost always been anthology titles or superhero series with fantastical backdrops, but Starlin created tales which were ongoing sagas, unlike the first, and yet true science fiction.

Starlin emerged as an artist doing pinch-hit work at Marvel in the early 1970's. His style developed slowly, but at full force it combined the ornate, decorative beauty and small panels of Barry Smith with the powerful action and twisting figures of Gil Kane in a ground-breaking synthesis. When he took over both the art and the plotting of the aimless, failing *Captain Marvel* with issue 25 (Mar. 1973) he was just beginning to hit his stride. Before his stay on the title ended, he would emerge as one of the prime creative forces of the decade.

In his nine-issue *Captain Marvel* saga, Starlin was still essentially working within the established Marvel universe. The plotline was a complex space-war involving such prominent characters as the Thing, the Avengers and the Skrulls, along with such newcomers as a bald, mystical, extraterrestrial woman named Moondragon, and Thanos, a tyrant from the moon Titan out to enslave the universe by obtaining an old Lee-Kirby creation, the Cosmic Cube. Along the way, Captain Marvel, in an encounter with a personifed metaphysical force called eon, is granted an extra-sensory "cosmic awareness" (CM 29, Nov. 1973). The stories were marred by poor Mike Friedrich scripting, an abundance of inkers, some bad, some good, but their very abundance depriving the strip of a consistent look—and a plethora of guest-stars and supporting characters, particularly the offensive Rick Jones, who obscured the originality of Starlin's thought. But from underneath it all emerged the rich complexity that was his to weave and the preoccupation with the ultimate, implacable evil that would make his next effort, *Warlock*, a comic to be reckoned with.

Warlock was another Marvel title which had tottered and floundered since its inception. Bringing it back in *Strange Tales* Number 178 (Feb. 1975) Starlin, however, took firm hold of it and immediately molded it to his own vision. Handling all the scripting chores himself, blessed by good and steady inking by himself and Steve Leialoha, and unhampered by the necessity to tailor his ideas to the set Marvel universe and include needless guest stars, Starlin was finally able to hew a vision of his own.

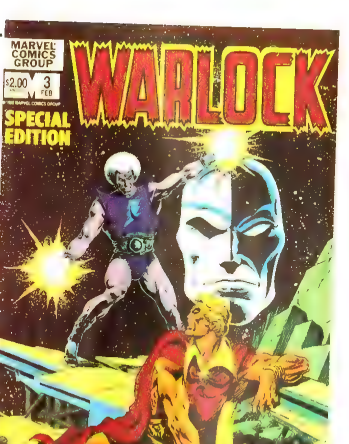
In a far-reaching eight-issue story, Starlin told of the ultimate confrontation between good and evil. The combatants were Adam Warlock, part superhero and part messiah, and the Magus, god-head of the Universal church, an insidious organization bent on enslaving the cosmos. "I am the Ultimate Force!" announced the evil god. "Depending upon my mood, worlds live or galaxies die! The very fabric of time, space, the mind or the soul are mine to command! I am *power* absolute!" Soon Warlock was shaken to learn that the Magus was not merely some external villain, but the dark side of his own soul.

The saga, until the final issue's confrontation (War. 11, Feb. 1976), was enlivened by the fact that neither Warlock nor the Magus dared destroy the other lest they both die, and by the wildly imaginative scenes and adventures which Warlock encountered on his quest to find his evil self. There was the Death Ship, populated by aliens of many defeated races, pressed into slave labor by the Universal Church; a cosmic kangaroo court composed of bizarre creatures—one all eye, one all mouth, one nothing but a six-tentacled head—who put Warlock on trial and killed all the witnesses who defended him; and the Land of the Way It Was, a realm of clowns, scarecrows, and the Madness Monster, a creator of nonsense who claimed to be everything Warlock sought—all created in Warlock's mind by a strange helmet.

The world of Adam Warlock was populated by a diverse and colorful supporting cast, including Pip, a hedonistic troll; the Matriarch, calculating temporal head of the Church who desired to dethrone the Magus; the Magus himself, a demonic, inverted messiah; Thanos, with his scheme for total stellar genocide; and Gamora, his beautiful, hapless, servant, who befriended Warlock. The most intriguing of all was Warlock himself, grim and complex, whom the fates decreed, in his own words, "savior, god-slayer, demon, and the avenging hand of light!" Possessed of a vampiric soul-gem that could, when unleashed, suck the soul of any being into Warlock's own, he fought to contain the ultimate evil while, at the same time, struggling to keep his own lusty fury under control.

Here Starlin's art had attained its full, awe-inspiring power. His page layouts were masterpieces of design, his worlds were wonderlands of hallucinatory weirdness, and his synthesis of Smith and Kane had equalled the finest work of either of his influences. He developed a repertory of personal storytelling gimmicks—Ditkoesque symbolism, shifting visual/narrative viewpoints, quick panel progressions suggesting stop-action camerawork—that told his stories in terms uniquely suited to the comic book medium. His scripting was wordy, for his complex plots required many words to make them comprehensible; but it was never overladen with the ponderous philosophizing so often associated with "cosmic" comic writing. His ideas were genuinely profound, and his writing was mature and unassuming enough to serve the profundity well.

After the end of the Magus epic, *Warlock* endured for four more issues before its cancellation (War. 15, Nov. 1976). Those four were desultory and unsatisfying (Starlin needed a huge canvas to put his talents to full effect), but the fans had seen neither the last of Adam Warlock nor of those immense abilities of Jim Starlin. In *Avengers Annual* 7 (1977), Thanos reveals his reason for his plan of stellar genocide: It is a love offering to Death, his beautiful and beloved mistress. Joining with the Avengers to stop him, Warlock sees both Pip and Gamora die, then is fatally wounded himself. "My mistress awaits you," says Thanos. "Tell her I follow shortly behind you, bringing an offering of undreamed-of magnitude. . . the stars!" But even in death, Warlock's story is fascinating, as he meets his own former self, prevents the Magus from ever having existed through a time paradox, and finds himself in a strange afterlife. Starlin concluded the story of Thanos in *Marvel Two-In-One Annual* 2 (1977), where Captain Mar-



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TWO COSMIC CAPERS BY STARLIN

vel reenters the picture to help the Avengers and the Thing destroy Thanos' plot.

Aside from four issues of Dr. Strange in late 1977, the conclusion of the Thanos story also marked the end of Starlin's work in the Marvel cosmos. His most important work in the years to come would be on creations all his own, with which he and Marvel together would help pave the way for a new approach to producing comics in the 1980's.

If the Marvel universe had seemed grand before Jim Starlin's arrival, now it had expanded until it bordered on the infinite. And in Starlin, comics had found not only a great imagination but an artisan who could communicate the true profundity and symbolic power of his ideas with force, awe and beautiful craftsmanship. Uniting the populous Marvel pantheon with the absolutism of Kirby's Fourth World and the broad view of true science fiction, Starlin's brief tenure at Marvel was like a blinding flash of revelation. On the heels of Thomas' Kree-Skrull War, Englehart's Dr. Strange stories and the many strange worlds of Steve Gerber, *Warlock* was the crowning touch of the huge Marvel world view, a view that fellow writer Don McGregor once called the "cosmic zap." In a beaker of psychedelia, audacity and playfulness, that "zap" transmuted past creations into new visions, took the comic book ideas that had once struck awe into the hearts of children and rekindled them so that they could do the same for the hearts of adults.

Warlock, true to Seventies form, sired no direct offspring, but Starlin's art, at least, had a prompt impact. Most of the major artists to rise to prominence in the next few years—George Perez, John Byrne, Keith Giffen, Craig Russell—shared his decorative dynamism.

Russell was the first of them to put his talents to good effect, working with Don McGregor on another Marvel science fiction strip, *War of the Worlds*, later called *Killraven* after its hero. Launched by Gerry Conway with art by Neal Adams and Howard Chaykin, the series revolved around the premise of what might happen if H.G. Wells' Martians were to invade Earth again in the near future, as in his *War of the Worlds*, but this time emerge victorious (*Amazing Adventures 18*, May 1973). The stories were set in a hideously altered future in which humanity has become a race of abject slaves for the tentacled Martians, and centered on a band of guerrillas fighting for emancipation. Particularly on the brash and violent Killraven. McGregor took over the writing soon after (joined in issue 27 by Russell), giving his readers a brilliantly envisioned future landscape. He included human breeding pens where the offspring of the enslaved provide the Martains with food, all manner of mutated

BEFORE THIS EPIC ENDED IT INVOLVED JUST ABOUT EVERYONE IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE.

beasts lurking in the ruined cities and poisoned seas, and a host of horrible Martain overseers who relish torturing mankind. All were strangely but chillingly wrought by the delicately lovely pencils of Russell. Unfortunately, the stories were marred by McGregor's tendency to overwrite (with characteristic ambition he set out to make each story a unique, significant work of a different type, describing them variously as "social satire," "fantasy head-trip," "realistic and relentless drama," "a bizarre love story," "a moralistic comic book of rather epic proportions") and by the abrupt discontinuation of the series before the storyline could be satisfactorily concluded ((AA 39, Nov. 1976).

A number of Marvel's brightest young talents got to try their hands at science fiction in the next few years. Most prominent among them was Steve Gerber, who revived the Guardians of the Galaxy, the team of futuristic heroes created by Arnold Drake in 1968. They became guest-stars in the *Defenders*, then starred in their own series in a new try-out title, *Marvel Presents* (*MP* 3, Feb. 1976). Although not one of Gerber's most inspired jobs, the series was a fun, high-energy space opera about a crew of argumentative quasi-human adventurers saving the universe from such threats as the Planet of the Absurd and the anti-life Topographical Man. Resolution came with the surprisingly graphic depiction of physical union between the latter threat and the astral projection of a female character, in what Gerber called the "Cosmic Consummation" (although "Copulation" might have been more apt). Gerber called the plot "the supreme affirmation of life," but it also shows a good dose of his usual satire and audacity (MP 7, Nov. 1976). the series was taken over the next issue by Roger Stern, a solid storyteller with a more standard Marvel approach, but was cancelled after twelve issues (Aug. 1977). The art was consistently handled by Allen Milgrom, who drew essentially in the "house style," but usually brought in a little extra dimension of imagination.

During the same period writer Doug Moench and the creative, energetic artist Rich Buckler (with newcomer George Perez) created Deathlok the Demolisher, a futuristic combination of human and computer, for *Astonishing Tales* (issue 25, August 1974). The series was short-lived, never allowing the seeds of the fascinating future world which Moench planted to flourish. It did introduce a remarkable character in Deathlok himself: Rather than a simple internal monologue, his thoughts came to us in the form of internal conversations between the tough human portion, Luther Manning, and the cold, overattentive, almost nagging data readouts of the computer.

To Steve Englehart and Al Milgrom fell the considerable task of continuing *Captain Marvel* after Jim Starlin's departure. They used much of Starlin's cosmic material, some of it well, but seemed too overwhelmed by their predecessor's scope to get a firm grip on the stories. They were followed by uneven work from writer Scott Edelman and various artists. But with issue 56 (May 1978) Doug Moench took over the writing and Pat Broderick the art. With a tightly controlled but dramatically powerful line, aided by the clean inks of Bob McLeod and Bruce Patterson, Broderick was able to remind readers of both Starlin and Gil Kane. With Moench contributing imaginative stories, the Captain was able to meet cancellation (CM 62, May 1979) with dignity (an attempt to revive him in the new *Marvel Spotlight*, July 1979, failed; in 1982 it would fall to Jim Starlin to write the final chapter in the hero's life).

Marvel's black & white magazines, at first devoted solely to horror and sword & sorcery (whose grisly subject matter enabled the lack of Code supervision to be exploited to good effect), made a foray into

I... HEY, WHAT THE DEVIL DID I DO?
THANOS! KNOWN ONLY AS PURVEYOR OF EVIL ONE'S
BY THE GREAT NEBULA!!! IT CAN NOT BE YOU!
I SAW YOU DIE! I KILLED YOU!
YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED IN RESURRECTING THE ULTIMATE AVENGER
WHO ARE YOU, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THAT YOU DID KILL ADAM WARLOCK, BUT NOT BEST WHICH YOU REALIZED A THREAT TO MY UNIVERSE...
NO-- STAY BACK!!
YOU CAN'T WIN! NO! NOOO
1985 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

science fiction in 1974 with *Planet of the Apes*, adapting the book, movies and tv show of that title. With writing by Conway and Moench and art by Mike Ploog, Tom Sutton and others, it was to lead the way to an explosion of adaptations of popular science fiction programs, movies and even toys in the second half of the 1970s. Next came *Marvel Preview*, which intermittently featured Star-Lord, originally conceived by Steve Englehart as a spacefaring anti-hero with an astrological bent (reflecting Englehart's sincere interest in the supernatural). The series was actually written by Chris Claremont, however, who was then just emerging as one of Marvel's prominent writers. He fleshed the character out and had fun writing what he called "classic Bob Heinlein/Ed Hamilton . . . space opera, complete with heroes, villains, a couple ingenues, neat visuals (mainly by John Byrne, with Terry Austin inking), and a wild technology." As such, it was one of Marvel's more entertaining contributions to the usually somber magazine format market.

Jim Starlin and his colleagues in Marvel's flirtation with science fiction contributed, from 1973 until about 1976—despite the brevity and unevenness to which their titles were subject—one of the few wholly original bright spots in the comics of that decade. Their work helped keep comics experimenting and reaching, and their best creations left memories that would enliven the resurgence of heroic comics in the 1980s.

CF

Animated Antics

BY MARK BAKSHI & PAUL DAVIDS

Bakshi's Crazy Shapiro from Heavy Traffic (1973) and Little Pete from American Pop (1981)

He's been through FIRE and he's been through ICE. He's the WIZARD of AMERICAN POP, who's braved HEAVY TRAFFIC in his quest to find THE LORD OF THE RINGS. He leaped into American cinema in 1971 with FRITZ THE CAT, a breakthrough in animation which proved that pussycats have neuroses and, above all, a potent sex drive that Hugh Hefner would envy.

"I operated, as a film director coming into the Seventies, under the influence of the auteur theory," explains Ralph Bakshi. "I wrote and directed my own movies—and they just happened to be animated films. I'll say this—I've sure had a lot of fun. I was allowed to do whatever I wanted to do. I don't know how I was so fortunate. Today producers call me and ask, 'how the hell did you get away with it?' I was able to put *anything* I wanted on the screen. Don't ask me why. I'll never understand it."

Bakshi's claim is no exaggeration. He gave us pathos and pity in *American Pop*, an animated feature which conveyed the full range of human emotion—the pain of struggle and the joy of soulful triumph. He interpreted the soaring, explosive imagery of Frank Frazetta in *Fire and Ice* and the Middle Earth of Tolkien in the film of *The*

WEEHAWK FROM WIZARDS

Lord of the Rings, which gave life to the battle cry of the hip generation of the '60s: "FRODO LIVES!" Again and again, he took us on journeys of searing, seamy images through the alleys and gutters of urban America—a roller coaster through cesspools of decaying streets. He portrayed gangs, dope addicts and perverts—most in the guise of animated animals with angst. *Fritz the Cat*, *Heavy Traffic* and *Coonskin* all held a mirror up to the naturalism and decay of contemporary city life.

And within the span of a mere twelve years, he also brought us *Wizards* and *Hey, Good Lookin'*—eight feature films in all. An ambitious and precedent-setting portfolio for any filmmaker, and especially for that most persistent, exacting species of filmmaker: the animator.

No wonder he's had to pause to catch his breath and take a much-needed, well-deserved respite. For the last couple of years, since the completion of *Fire and Ice* in 1983, Ralph Bakshi has channeled most of his energies into his art studio, generating a constant flow of work that is exhibited in his Madison Avenue gallery.

The path he's travelled in animated features has proven to be a financial minefield. "Well, you have to take risks," he says, sighing. "Lots of risks. But I will say that for my future projects, I'm determined not to make the same kinds of mistakes my company made the first time around." He pauses to reflect, and then breaks into an enormous laugh. "Or maybe the answer is to just get really lucky," he continues. "Get lucky, that's it! Make the same mistakes, but just get really lucky.

"Maybe if Robert Crumb and I had been paid what we were owed on *Fritz the Cat*, my studio could have survived *Coonskin* and its controversy," Bakshi explains. "*Fritz* was a Steve Krantz production, and so was *Heavy Traffic*. The first of the films that came strictly from Bakshi productions was *Coonskin*, which in my opinion was one of my best films. There's always a big risk in taking animation into the socio-political arena—and before *Fritz the Cat* and our films that followed, animated features had never been made specifically for *adults*.

"Right at the outset, when I went off on my own, I had two films, *Hey, Good Lookin'* and *Coonskin*, that ran into trouble with distribution and opposition from certain organizations which caused the studio many problems. Then came my movement away from social commentary animation toward fantasy, in films like *Lord of the Rings, Wizards* and *Fire and Ice*. Perhaps it was intended as a commercial move. But it certainly wasn't a bitter pill to swallow, because I have always enjoyed fantasy. I grew up on E.C. Comics, so fantasy wasn't anything I didn't totally understand."

He pauses to reflect. "Had *Coonskin* been successful, I don't know if I would have moved into fantasy. That's the question mark; I'm not sure.

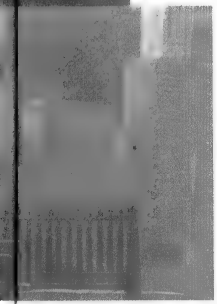
"What was devastating with *Coonskin* was I was in it all alone, so it was critical that it be successful, in the same way that Don Bluth had so much at risk with his first feature, *The Secret of Nimh*, which suffered at the box office too. My company never really recovered from *Coonskin's* lack of financial success. The two main projects at the time were *Coonskin* and *Hey, Good Lookin'—Coonskin* was released while *Good Lookin'* was on the animators' drawing boards. The latter film suffered because of the performance of the former, because Warner Bros. backed away from the film before completion. They stopped financing it. Actually, given the circumstances, I think we did a remarkable job of remaining afloat. Unfortunately, I was always paying off on the films that were in release. *Wizards* had a miserable budget of one million dollars. It should have had four or five million."

Looking at Bakshi's work, it is obvious that there came a point when he moved away from the freehand animation of *Fritz the Cat* to a greater reliance on rotoscoping.

"The move to rotoscoping happened with *Lord of the Rings*, where the only way I could see doing the film was in a realistic manner. I had a treat with rotoscope, because I trained a number of animators with it. Suddenly, on that picture, we went from using about fifteen animators to using eighty or ninety! Those kids were all trained on rotoscoping on that picture, and a lot of top-notch young animators came

Scenes from Fire&Ice and American Pop.

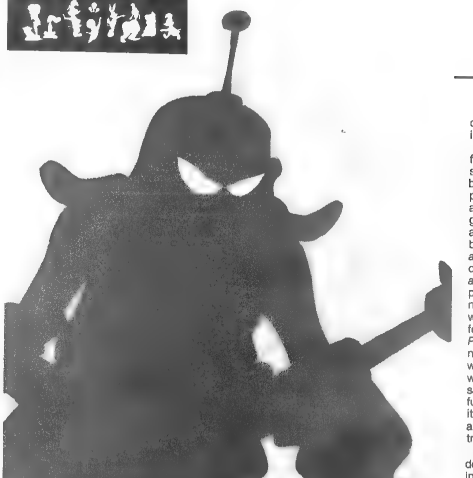
This character from Coonskin brought Bakshi a great deal of controversy!



out of it—people like Steve Gordon, Bruce Woodside, Tom "T" and Leonard Robinson. Of course, not all the work was of the same calibre for the film, but I expected that and hoped that down the road the fellows I'd brought aboard would develop and turn out well, and they certainly did. It was a great training ground, and the kind of animation quality we achieved on *American Pop* and *Fire and Ice* really had its start with the team that accomplished *Lord of the Rings*."

It's a fact that the rotoscoping technique has been in wide use since the earliest days of the first Walt Disney feature animated films. Disney Studios, however, always kept it hushed up that they modelled their movements of human characters on footage of live actors. Bakshi Studios applied the rotoscoping technique on a larger scale, by staging all kinds of action scenes that were filmed in black & white and later expanded and modified via animation. In fact, Mark Bakshi (half of this article's writing team) has directed an enlightening short film about the making of *Fire and Ice*, which explains just how Ralph Bakshi's rotoscoping operation functioned.

Several cameras run at the same time,



filming live actors. It doesn't matter if the cameras get in the way of one another or show up on film, because they'll all be drawn out later. Similarly, there are no sets—but the stages aren't entirely barren. For instance, metal scaffolding might be used to represent a cliff a character has to climb. However, the human actors will frequently have to interact with characters who aren't there, as in a Ray Harryhausen Dynamation film. This was certainly true in *Fire and Ice*, in the scene in which people were running through the swamps being chased by dinosaurs. For rotoscoping, the actors created chaos on an empty sound stage, running, leaping and hurling spears as the camera swiftly dollied away from them. The dinosaurs were later added via freehand animation, on cels layered against the rotoscoped actions of the human characters.

"*American Pop* was a breakthrough in animation for me," says Ralph Bakshi, "and I think it shows a whole new dimension of what's possible through the use of rotoscoping. But it didn't fare well with movie audiences. I've always felt," he adds, reflectively, "that *Pop* had no business not being successful—but those are the facts of life.

"When it hit the Z channel, when it hit cable, the phone didn't stop ringing with calls from all four corners of America," Bakshi explains. "When the public finally saw it on tv and discovered what it was—a serious and moving film that, in a sense, told the history of modern America through its music—they absolutely *loved* it. Of all the movies I've made, I never saw such an overwhelming response. But it wasn't discovered while it was out there in the theatres.

"What people told me," he continues, "is that they had no idea that animation could be so intricate. And that's our struggle. All of us in the animation business are faced with that struggle. It's so very frustrating that an *American Pop* couldn't generate sufficient word-of-mouth to boost it into the realm of box office success. It's ridiculous, really—especially when you consider that there are minor live-action pictures that can go through the roof commercially. But *American Pop* couldn't get the attention it needed until it reached cable tv. *American Pop* was also rather inexpensive—a $1½ million film.

"All our company needed at any point was for any one of the films to be successful, so we could pay off the burden that had built up since *Coonskin*. Finally, after a prolonged struggle and an enormous amount of pressure, . finally decided I was going to take a pause in producing feature animation. I think I knew I would need a breather at the beginning of producing *Fire and Ice*—8 pictures in 11 years was a very difficult non-stop marathon . . . especially 8 *animated* pictures. But the pause was primarily for the purpose of reconsidering. I needed to reconsider what I could do that would really be new. As *Wizards* was different from *Coonskin*, and as *American Pop* was different from *Wizards*, I knew I needed to search for another leap that would be different—a breakthrough. I wasn't interested in rotoscope for its own sake, certainly. The truth is, it's not much fun. I have to say that rotoscoping is definitely not much fun compared to directing animation. But it was something I had to try!

"The way I used rotoscoping does go to demonstrate the firm belief I've always had in giving animators the chance they need to really develop—because rotoscoping is probably the best training ground there is. The animators who pulled off that footage of the dinosaurs in *Fire and Ice* were the kids who learned the ropes on *Lord of the Rings* and who matured in combat, so to speak. They could do anything. My animators got so sensational. In fact, all of the rotoscope work on *Fire and Ice* was better than what we had done before. And of course, we'd always worked on very limited budgets. I'm not offering any alibis, it's just the hard fact of what we went through. If I'd had more money for executing some of the scenes—and I don't even mean a lot more—you would have seen some of the very best animation in the business. I'm very proud of the animators. Take a close look at the footage sometime—the lizards, the pterodactyls—many of the characters were fully animated. Coming off the rotoscope training, my animators were capable of those kinds of results. Had we done another fantasy film right after *Fire and Ice*, it would have been even more sensational. You have to learn to take risks with people, to invest in people's capacity to learn, grow and polish their talents. That's especially true in animation because it's so hard to learn, it takes so long and requires so much experience.

CONTINUED ON INSIDE BACK COVER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

give you a chance and send you a color sep with instructions."

John Romita describes how his career was launched and compares it with the comics business of today.

"I've been in the business since 1950, and got into it on a temporary basis. Somebody asked me if I could do some ghosting for him. I was working for Stan Lee for a year before he even knew my name. When I told him that I had been working for him he thought I was kidding. The truth of the matter is that I thought I'd make a few bucks. When I had enough in the bank to support myself, I'd do some illustration for the *Saturday Evening Post* and I could then forget comics, because I thought it was just a matter of days before comics were extinct.

"Then the *Post* went out of business and *Collier's* went under and I thought that I'd better stay in comics as long as I could, and I have. All through the years I've been in comics, I think it's been something like eight times that the prophets of doom have said that it's all going to fizzle out in another year. But we're still in a business that was supposed to be extinct."

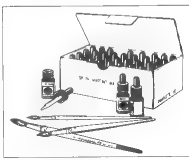
COMICS TODAY AND TOMORROW

Jim Shooter says comics are a business and being in them means work. But it also means being decently paid, including fringe benefits that a decade ago were not available to top comics professionals.

"Page rates vary with the experience of

Coloring

A colorist does his or her work on copies of the finished, black-and white original comics art pages, reduced to the size at which they're typically printed. The next four story pages of this book have been reduced to that size and left uncolored to stimulate the actual working conditions professional Marvel Comics colorists face.



Tools and Technical Information:
Colorists generally use **Dr. P.H. Martin's Watercolor Dyes**, which are available in many art supply stores. They apply the dyes using standard watercolor brushes. However, the medium used is not important. Comics colorists are actually making **color guides** which our engravers and printers use only as indicators to tell them which colors to place where. The color guides are not exactly reproduced and therefore do not have to meet exacting technical specifications.

Below is a color chart, which graphically shows every single color that can be printed in a standard comic book. This is your "palette."

Any type of color medium - crayons, colored pencils, markers, whatever, will do, as long as they can be used to simulate these colors.

Flat Hues
The primary purpose of all creative efforts that go into comics is **storytelling!** Very simply, anything that improves the communication of the story - including making it more dramatic, interesting, and entertaining is desirable. Anything that impedes, confuses, or loses the story is not what we want.

But, how can a colorist, who is receiving pages to work on that are entirely finished except for color, contribute to telling the story? The colorist can't alter the dialogue or change the basic artwork—but he or she can follow these priorities:

BREAKING IN AT MARVEL

1 **Clarity** Make each panel clear and easy to interpret visually. Make it easy for a reader to understand what he is seeing. Contrast is a key factor.

2 **Depth**—Good color choices can create the illusion of depth in a comic illustration, making close up objects appear to be close and distant objects appear to be far away. It's very difficult to achieve clarity unless you can produce the illusion of depth. Generally speaking, dark, strong colors tend to "come forward" and light, pastel colors tend to "fade back." However, every color in a panel influences the effect of all other colors in that panel—it's all relative.

3 **"Convincingness"** This includes creating mood, effect, and the illusion of reality. You cannot do absolutely true-to-life paintings with only sixty-four colors, but with skill and imagination you can give your work a convincing feel. This is where the true artistry, the real challenge of coloring comes in. The limitations are many—only 64 colors, no "modeling" or blending of colors, and no say over the pictures to be colored - but as you can see from the preceding three pages, colored beautifully by Christie Scheele - quite a bit can be done within the limitations.

Give it a try!

Scripting

A scripter does his work using the original comics art pages produced by the penciller, based on the story plot. The next five story pages of this book are penciled but not scripted. The portion of the story plot from which these penciled pages were drawn appears on the following page for you to refer to, as a professional comics scripter would. This simulates the actual working conditions professional Marvel Comics scripters face.

Tools and Technical Information:
The scripter creates the dialogue, sound effects, captions, and other copy which appears on finished comics pages (which the letterer actually inscribes on the pages) He also indicates just where in each panel the copy he's written should be placed. He does this by numbering the copy on his typed script pages and making correspondingly numbered rough indications of the balloons, captions, etc. where he desires them on the art pages. In the section on lettering, two pages of actual scripts are reproduced, as well as two pages of art with placement indications (pages 16--18 of this book) Refer to these as examples.

Scripters type their scripts on regular typing paper. The only other tool necessary is a pencil to indicate where the copy he writes is to be placed on each art page by the letterer.

The Goal:
Storytelling, again, of course, is the primary goal—communicating the ideas of the story, generating interest in the story, keeping the readers aware of essential story information, and most of all, entertaining them.

The scripter generally also created the story plot, but not always. Whether he did or not, he must convey all the plot's points by writing appropriate dialogue and captions. Ideally, the scripter is constantly moving the story forward, building drama, and developing the story's theme. At the same time, it is important to keep the dialogue sounding natural and in character.

Closely examine the dialogue, captions, and other copy on the preceding pages. Try to get a feel from those pages for what kind of information is best conveyed in captions and what is best covered in the dialogue. Count the words in various balloons and captions to get an idea for how much copy you can comfortably fit in a balloon or caption in a panel, on a page. Study the placement of the copy. Note that an effort is made not to cover anything important in the art. This should be especially easy to see on the pages in the lettering section. Pay special attention to the way sound effects are used.

Give it a try!

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The Plot

PAGE ONE[illegible] Cut to Peter Parker reading the Bugle. Later, with Ock's "personal" on page one. It says: "I have your secret girlfriend hostage. Be at Jameson's office at four or she dies. Horribly. Enjoyed Dr. Otto Octavius." Pete is beside himself. Now what? It could be a bluff. (It is, in fact, but he doesn't know that.) He calls the police, hoping that she's called (whoever she is!) to report that it's not true -- that she's really safe. Naturally, the police have gotten hundreds of calls from people claiming to be "Spider-Man's secret girlfriend" claiming all sorts of wild things. They've gotten calls from "Dr. Octopus" too -- all phonies. There's nothing to do but obey the orders in Ock's ad. Pete changes.

PAGE NINETEEN Cut to JJJ's office as Spider-Man enters. JJJ is ranting: That first ad never should have been allowed to run! What does Ock want me to do, asks Spider-Man. Wait here, says JJJ, who continues ranting. Oh, no, thinks Spider-Man -- I've got to stay here and listen to JJJ -- boy, Ock fights dirty.

Cut to the Bugle's reception desk area. There are police around, of course, and a few civilians, reporters, etc. Milling. Suddenly, Janet races in!

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the artist," Shooter states. "But the page rate up front is almost academic these days—we pay around a hundred dollars. Beginners can expect substantially lower than that for pencils. Inks are not quite as much. Scripts are not quite as much. Coloring and lettering are around ten dollars a page. The important thing is not the page rate up front but the incentive payment that you get based on the sales of the book. If a book really sells, you can get much more money for your job than just the page rate. Currently I don't know if there are any Marvel books which do not pay an incentive. Some of them sell well enough to pay very large incentives. It is possible to earn a very good living in this business if you're fast and your work is popular. The best paid fellow is John Byrne who probably makes somewhere in the 350 thousand dollar range. For a beginner, or for someone whose work doesn't sell very well, it's possible to have a subsistence level income. Anyone who's working regularly, though, can expect to make a very good living. Even with just lettering and coloring skills we have some who earn in the $50 thousand a year range. It's a very good profession."

One concern of working professionals in recent years is the work-for-hire stipulation, meaning that Marvel owns all rights to material they assign to artists and writers. While creators can own their own work under the Epic Comics imprint for Marvel, the vast majority of the material published is of the work-for-hire variety.

"If you work on a work-for-hire basis and Marvel expects to get guys like Frank Miller, Walt Simonson and John Byrne, we obviously have to pay *real* well. Included in that pay we provide major medical coverage, life insurance and we pay for all working expenses. We provide paper, pencils, pen, inks, telephone and we fly people into the city and take them to lunches and are generally cognizant of the fact that if you're asking somebody to do work-for-hire, you had better make it worth their while.

"The nice thing is that you can do both," Shooter adds, "You can take pretty much of a sure thing and make a nice living and still have time to do an Epic comic with something you own. If it hits big some day maybe it will make you a fortune. In the meantime you'll make more money working on something like *The Fantastic Four*. But if you do something that turns out to be the next *Star Wars*, you could be worth a million."

Shooter is candid in comparing the state of comic books today with what they have been like in the past, but he also puts it into perspective and sees Marvel's rising sales and other indicators as a positive sign for the industry now and in the future.

"Right now, in this country, we sell 200 million comic books a year—the whole industry combined. In 1951 the industry sold almost a billion comics. In 1951 comics were a dime. On the other hand, what is a dime worth these days? It's got to be comparable to a 65 cent comic book, so presumably the product and the price are still roughly comparable. We sell one-fifth as much as we once did as an industry. We have a larger population base and are selling to a much broader spectrum of readers. We are covering the entire population now and it seems to me that we can easily and reasonably expect to quintuple in size before we begin to feel any pressure. There are comic books in Japan which sell two million copies a week.

"The potential is there," Shooter concludes, "with our incentive program, if we have comics that sell a million or more, the income will be comparable with any in the entertainment industry."

CF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

THE AVENGERS 264—Introducing. . . . the all-new Yellowjacket, the most fearsome foe the Wasp has ever faced. "Wings and Stings" is written by Roger Stern, penciled by John Buscema and inked by Tom Palmer.

CONAN 179—Written by Jim Owsley, penciled by John Buscema and inked by Bob Camp.

MARVEL TALES 184—Reprinting the classic "Where Crawls the Lizard" from AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 44 written by Stan Lee, penciled by John Romita and inked by Mike Esposito.

X-MEN 202—Rachel/Phoenix is out to kill the Beyonder. "To kill the Beyonder" is written by Chris Claremont, penciled by John Romita Jr. and guest-inked by Al Williamson. A SECRET WARS II tie-in.

ROM 75—Final issue. "The End" is written by Bill Mantlo, pencilled by Steve Ditko and inked by P. Craig Russell

G.I. JOE 44—Desert maneuvers turn into a deadly, no-quarter given firefight between the newest members of G.I. Joe (Heavy Metal, Crankcase, Bazook and Airtight) and Cobra's deadliest forces led by Destro, the Baroness and a new Cobra force leader. "Improvisations on a Theme!" is written by Larry Hama, penciled by Rod Whigham and inked by Andy Mushynsky.

NIGHTCRAWLER [Limited Series] 4—It's Nightcrawler and his friends in a final showdown against Shagreen the sorceror and . . . Dark Bam! in a wild Limited series wrap-up intriguingly titled "The Wizard of Oops" written and drawn by Dave Cockrum.

THE ETERNALS 5—Written by Peter B. Gillis, penciled and inked by Sal Buscema.

THE PUNISHER [Limited Series] 2—Is the Kingpin dead? The Punisher claims he is. . . because he killed him! For the underworld this means war—not against the Punisher, but each other to settle the question of who will be the next crimelord! "Back to the War" is written by Steven Grant, penciled by Mike Zeck and inked by John Beatty. Cover painting by Mike Zeck and Phil Zimmerman

MARVEL SAGA 3—The official linear history of the Marvel Universe continues with the conclusion of the thrilling origin of Spider-Man and the complete origins of the Sub-Mariner and Doctor Doom. Wraparound cover by Ron Frenz and John Byrne.

MARVEL FREAK POSTERS 3—SECRET WARS II by Ron Wilson and Steve Lelaloha, ALIEN LEGION by Frank Cirocco, WOLVERINE by Rick Leonardi and Terry Austin and STAR COMICS by Warren Kremer.

DREADSTAR 22—With Odi and Dr. Delphi gone, Dreadstar and his friends split up "The Hunted" is written and penciled by Jim Starlin and inked by Sam de la Rosa. An Epic Comic. Direct Sales only.

Titles shipping October 22, on sale November 12

FANTASTIC FOUR 287—The one man the FF hoped would never return. But the FF have no time for him, because they've got to defend the Latverian embassy from a mysterious villain with incredible powers. "Prisoner of the Flesh" is written and penciled by John Byrne and inked by Joe Sinnott.

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN 203—With the aid of Henry Pym, Iron Man must shrink to the size of an ant to recover his fortune lost in a bank's computer. "The Maze Monster" is written by Denny O'Neil, penciled by Mark Bright and inked by Ian Akin and Brian Garvey.

PETER PARKER THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN 111—The battle between Spidey, the Puma and the Beyonder continues in this crossover with both AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 273 and SECRET WARS II 7. "Power Play" is written by Peter David, penciled by Mark Beachan and inked by Brett Breeding.

THOR 364—Who will rule Asgard? It appears the choice must be Loki because Thor's evil half-brother has transformed the Thunder God into. . . a frog. Written and drawn by Walt Simonson.

THE TRANSFORMERS 13—Megatron returns. "Shooting Star" is written by Bob Budiansky, penciled by Don Perlin and inked by Al Gordon.

ELFQUEST 7—Written by Wendy and Richard Pini and drawn by Wendy Pini. An Epic Comic.

SECRET WARS II [Limited Series] 8—The Beyonder has fathomed the existence of humanity. Now he has made his decision; mankind must die! Written by Jim Shooter, penciled by Al Milgrom and inked by Steve Leialoha.

SIX FROM SIRIUS II [Limited series] 1—Wanted for treason: Jakosa Lone and his team (aka: The Six From Sirius). "The Trojan Horse" is written by Doug Moench and illustrated with paintings by Paul Gulacy. An Epic Comic. Direct Sales only. For Mature readers.

X-FACTOR 1—THE ORIGINAL X-MEN are back, but are they mutant saviors—or mutant slayers? The double-sized debut is titled "Third Genesis" and is written and inked by Bob Layton and penciled by Jackson Guice.

THE NEW DEFENDERS 152—The Interloper and the Defenders take on Moondragon. Will even the help of the Beyonder be enough? A double-sized final issue that also ties in with SECRET WARS II. "The End of All Songs" is written by Peter B. Gillis, penciled by Don Perlin and inked by Dell Barras. Cover painting by Frank Cirocco.

DOCTOR WHO 17—Direct sales only.

ALIEN LEGION 11—The truce between the Harkilons and the Alien Legion falls apart. Written by Alan Zelenetz, penciled by Chris Warner and inked by Randy Emberlin. An Epic Comic. Direct Sales only.

MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL 21: GREENBERG THE VAMPIRE—He's a writer of horror novels who speaks from experience, because he's a vampire! What happens when he develops a writer's block and has to go out to do research? Written by J. Marc DeMattels, and drawn by Mark Badger.

THE OFFICIAL MARVEL COMICS INDEX TO MARVEL TEAM-UP 2—The complete synopses and color cover reproductions of MARVEL TEAM-UP's 25 through 50. Cover by Howard Bender. Compiled by George Olshevsky. Direct Sales only.

DC COMICS

Shipping October 8, 1985 , on sale October 31.

CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS 11—The end of the Multiverse and the beginning of the new DC Comics universe. Wolfman/Perez/Ordway/Perez

LEGIONNAIRES THREE 1 [4-issue series]—The Time Trapper kidnaps the first Legion baby. Giffen & Newell/Colon/Kesel/Colon & Kesel.

MASK 3—Anarchy reigns in merry old England. Can MASK put a stop to it? Fleisher/Chen/Del Beato/Chen & Del Beato.

1986 DC CALENDAR—Poster by Perez, Garcia-Lopez, Cullins, Giffen, Giordano and others.

Shipping October 15, 1985 for sale November 7, 1985.

DC COMICS PRESENTS 86 (FIRESTORM AND CAPT. ATOM)—A disaster in space, a nuclear foe. It's a job for Superman—plus Firestorm and Captain Atom. Kupperberg/Cowan.

BEST OF DC DIGEST 69 (YEAR'S BEST TEAM STORIES)—Infinity, Inc.; the Outsiders; and the Teen Titans showcase their best stores. Various.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

EDITORIAL CONINTUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER

Did anyone notice that I am the first person in over a decade to receive the special naming bestowed on so many Marvel staffers by Stan the Man in the past? Henceforth you are to know me as Happy Hal. Thanks Stan.

Returning to the subject of San Diego Comicon, I wanted to mention what a fantastic time I had there, as did thousands of other enthusiastic fans. Having dinner at the same table as Forry (*Vampirella, Famous Monsters, Monsterland*) Ackerman and his charming Wendayne while sitting next to the King of Comics, Jack Kirby himself, is quite a pleasant way to spend a banquet dinner. Being told by Jerry Siegel that he enjoys *Comics Feature* is equally a joy. Julius Schwartz, perhaps the finest editor working in comic books today, asked me to sign the splash page from the Superman birthday tribute to him. Peter Gillis informed me of the many exciting projects that he is working on (Peter is an alumni of *Comics Feature*), including the direction he will be taking the *Eternals* in and his plans for upcoming issues of *Dr. Strange*. Carol Kalish, formerly editor of *Comic Feature* and now direct sales manager for Marvel Comics, was charming as usual. Marvel Productions' Paul Davids spent a great deal of time with us (as did his beautiful wife, Hollace, Columbia Picture's best publicist). Several of this magazine's columnists also put in an appearance, and it was a pleasure to meet Max Allan Collins, Gerard Jones and Mike Benton. Capital City's Milton Griepp and John Davis and Comics & Comix' John Barrett dropped by for a chat. All in all, it was a time I will not soon forget.

Just the other night Roy and Danette Thomas provided an equally pleasant evening at a party in honor of Alfredo Alcala's birthday. Loads of people were having a great time, including Gerry Conway, Jim Hannon, Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier and, of course, Alfredo himself!

It is still too early to know the reactions to the changes to *Comics Feature* as I write this, but I cannot begin to imagine anything but tremendous results from lowering our cover price by 40% and adding Stan Lee and Mike Benton at the same time! Don't anyone panic by the absence of Max Allan Collins this issue, as he will definitely be back next time—the press of schedules and all of that. Jim Van Hise puts in quite a bravura performance with his HEROES column this time, presenting the first part of his complete history of the Silver Age Green Lantern, one of the most important characters in the DC Universe. Speaking of the DC Universe, Roy told me some really fascinating directions that will result from the changes in the CRISIS maxiseries that I cannot reveal just yet. . . but in the very near future! While Van Hise devoted himself to GL, Paul Davids and Mark Bakshi did yeoman work filling in on the animation column. Paul assisted Mark in a rather unique venture—interviewing his own father! I am sure that he has a perspective that no one else could have achieved. And Ralph is very frank and revealing. Besides the usual fascinating updates on the gaming field, Steve Perrin, the creator of both the Elfquest and Superworld games, lets us in on a little of what he has been up to lately. Over on the strips desk, Ron Goulart, besides completing his overview of the Big Red Cheese in his own column, fills in for the absent Max with an interesting piece on Al Capp's *Li'l Abner.*

We again have a very brief letters section this issue because we do not have any other printable letters on hand. Please, please, rectify this situation. Certainly you must have something to say, an opinion to express or an interesting experience to relate. Let us hear from you.

Publishers Picks

Every comic book published by Marvel and DC put in an appearance over the past two columns. Just how do you follow that act? By offering a few choice items that you might not have noticed. These include titles from some very small publishers who are doing work worthy of your time and attention. *The Ditko Collection* is over 100 pages of some of the rarest comic book stories by one of the four-color world's premier craftsmen. Most are gathered from sources that were obscure even when they were first printed ten to twenty years ago! If you enjoy hard-hitting action or are a fan of Randian philosophy, this is one you won't want to pass up.

Women and the Comics is not a perfect book: It has its flaws and sometimes seems to make its points a bit too stridently. However, it does fill a crying need, and you can certainly sympathize with Trina Robbins and Cat Yronwode's anxious approach. Women have been ignored in this seemingly male province for far too long. Things are not what they seem, after all.

Peter O'Donnell and Jim Holdaway created one of the finest comic book heroines ever . . . in fact one of the best character strips of all time. The interplay between Modesty Blaise and Garvin, and the sheer tension created in the storylines, is collected in fine fashion in Titan Books' *Modesty Blaise: The Gabriel Set-Up*. More reprint collections are promised.

Yes, there will be a few comic books among my selections. Charlton has a new title out, *Static*. This is Ditko again with some excellent new material.

Crossfire is by Mark Evanier and Dan Spiegle. This Eclipse title is one of my favorites. It has interesting characters, intelligent stories and some of the best art being published. Spiegle has always been one of my favorites, and Evanier brought out some mean issues of *Blackhawks* a few years back.

Another interesting Eclipse title, *Miracleman*, has gathered more attention due to the fact that it's the first really competitive title offered by a specialty market publisher (at $.75 for 31 story pages on better paper with excellent color, it is more than competitive). The various problems involved with getting copies to market (a large percentage of the run was destroyed in transit) and the fact that Marvel Comics forced a name change even though the character was being called Marvelman before there even was a Marvel, have also received notoriety. Those are the wrong reasons to pick one of these up. The right reasons are the interesting stories and fine artwork. England's Quality Comics is copublishing this one and their hand is obvious in the "quality" of the book.

The next one you might not notice is from Marvel, of all places. It seems that everyone has stopped reading the adventures of The Man Without Fear. Frank Miller is now back as *Daredevil's* writer, so its time to pick it up again. With Byrne doing The Hulk and FF, Miller on DD and Simonson on Thor, a lot of the old, tired Marvel standbys are showing new vitality!

Several of Marvel's kiddie comics, published under the Star imprint, deserve a look. Primary among these is *Misty*. If you remember Katy Keene, or just enjoy a good time, you'll want to get a look at what Trina Robbins is doing.

© 1985 DC COMICS
MAR 1985
APPROVED BY COMICS CODE
DC
GREEN LANTERN
12¢
GREEN LANTERN OF EARTH, THIS HIGH COURT OF THE GREEN LANTERNS OF THE UNIVERSE FINDS YOU INNOCENT OF THE CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST YOU!
NO--NO! I'M GUILTY! YOU MUST STRIP ME OF MY SUPER POWERS!
FEATURING
THE STRANGE TRIAL OF GREEN LANTERN!

Issue 4 has one of those stories, which reveals that GL's strapless mask is kept on his face by the energy of his power ring. The lead story is another close encounter with Qward, and features nice Murphy Anderson inks.

MORE GREEN LANTERNS

Green Lantern #5 introduces Hector Hammond, a super-scientist who kidnaps other scientists in order to develop ultra-modern inventions. The flighty Carol Ferris actually falls for him until GL sees to it that Hammond's criminal acts are exposed.

"The World of Living Phantoms" in issue 6 introduces Tomar-Re, Green Lantern of the planet Xudar. In so doing it begins to show what other members of the corps are like.

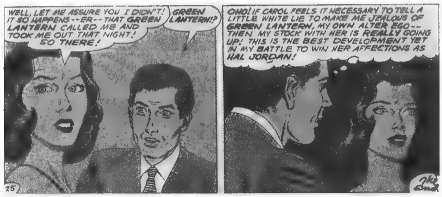
"The Day 100,000 People Vanished" introduces another Green Lantern, only this one, Sinestro, is a renegade who had been stripped of his power by the Guardians. When exiled to Qward, he aids the extra-dimensionals in kidnapping GL, but through a ruse (tinkering with an alien clock!) our hero escapes.

Issue #8 introduces one of the most interesting concepts in the series, and yet one which is only rarely used. In "The Challenge From 5700 A.D.," the people of future Earth snatch GL from our era to make him their Solar Director, who'll aid them in times of crisis. The switch is compounded by their giving him false memories and the identity of Pol Manning, 57th Century explorer (or more accurately, 58th Century explorer, but I guess nobody's perfect, even in the future). The challenge in that era comes from gila monster who retreated underground in the year 2000 and evolved into an advanced race with unusual powers. The beasts fire rays from their eyes which seemingly disintegrate anyone on contact. When GL uses his power ring against the rays, the powers stalemate each other. Then GL discovers that, rather than destroy their victims, the creatures' eye-beams shrink their targets into a microworld. After our hero defeats the lizards he returns to his era with no memory of ever having left it. Since he was there for 23 hours, he is puzzled when his ring abruptly runs out of energy. The cover of this issue, which employed a process known as craftint doubletone, gives a painted effect to the artwork and is one of the standout covers of the series.

Issue 10 has a story which is a contrived explanation of GL's oath.

"Green Lantern's Statue Goes to War" in #12 is another GL in 5700 A.D. adventure which, while interesting, doesn't live up to the promise of the concept as it was introduced in issue 8.

Something rare in the DCs of 1962 were super character team-ups. These generally took place only in the then-new *Justice League of America* or with Superman and Batman in *World's Finest*. But GL #13 introduces what would become a crossover tradition—the teaming of Flash with Green


WELL, LET ME ASSURE YOU, I DIDN'T! IT SO HAPPENS--RE-- THAT GREEN LANTERN CALLED ME AND TOOK ME OUT THAT NIGHT! SO THERE!
GREEN LANTERN?
OHO! IF CAROL FEELS IT NECESSARY TO TELL A LITTLE WHITE LIE TO MAKE ME JEALOUS OF GREEN LANTERN, MY OWN ALTER EGO--THEN MY STOCK WITH HER IS REALLY GOING UP! THIS IS THE BEST DEVELOPMENT YET IN MY BATTLE TO WIN HER AFFECTIONS AS HAL JORDAN!
25

HUMAN EMOTIONS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE SERIES, WHETHER THE HERO IS REACTING TO A LOVED ONE OR TO A RENEGADE GREEN LANTERN.

I AM OFFERING YOU A FULL PARTNERSHIP IN MY CRUSADE OF EVIL, GREEN LANTERN! TOGETHER WE CAN DESTROY THE GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE AND ESTABLISH OURSELVES IN POWER IN THEIR PLACE! THERE IS NO LIMIT TO THE HEIGHTS WE CAN ATTAIN! BUT--
--IF YOU REFUSE, THE PENALTY IS DEATH! MAKE YOUR CHOICE--YOU HAVE EXACTLY FIVE SECONDS!
I DON'T NEED FIVE SECONDS!
IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS, THE RENEGADE PREPARES TO MEET HIS DOOM WITH AS MUCH DIGNITY AS HE CAN MUSTER!
COMING AT ME? NO, THANK YOU! ANSWER ME! I CAN'T! THIS POINT-BLANK ARMOR HOLDS!

Lantern. Since Julius Schwartz was the editor of both books, all he had to do was ask himself if he thought it was a good idea.

NEW FRIENDS, NEW ENEMIES

The story, "The Duel of the Super-Heroes," was done during that halcyon time when team-ups of heroes (or as they're called now, crossovers) were unique and unusual—an event to be looked forward to with great expectation. The *Justice League of America* team-ups weren't personalized the way the one-on-one meetings of the superguys were.

The story opens with GL surpassing the speed of light on his way back to Earth and winding up on a parallel world. The aliens there know who he is and explain how he can return home, although GL is suspicious of the supposed happenstance of the meeting. The first quirk after he comes back shows up when he recharges his power ring to the oath:

> In brightest day, In blackest night,
> All evil shall escape my sight!
> Let those who worship evil's might,
> Fear not my power—GREEN LANTERN'S LIGHT!

While Pieface (hate that name!) notices the obvious discrepency, GL acts as though it's business as usual.

That weekend Hal Jordan is meeting with reporter Iris West, who is accompanied by Barry Allen, her boyfriend. At this point, while GL and the Flash know one another, Barry and Hal do not. Hal begins acting strangely and, upon following him, Barry sees Hal don his GL garb and stare into his power ring, which communicates with him. Changing to the Flash, he confronts Green Lantern, whereupon the Emerald Gladiator attacks and chases him. The battle doesn't go well for Flash, so he ducks out and changes back to Barry Allen, thus eluding GL. Flash later decides that he must learn the reason for his fellow Justice Leaguer's aberrant behavior, and to do that he must allow himself to be captured. GL then takes Flash to the other-dimensional world of the Spectarns, who want the Flash in order to learn his super-speed secret and penetrate the faster-than-light barrier. They had already considered stealing GL's power ring but recognized the difficulties in that. They place the paralyzed Flash before a device which begins analyzing the chemical changes in his body which brought about his speed abilities.

Green Lantern returns to Earth, where his capture of the Flash is blacked out from his memory. When Pieface tells him that he and Barry Allen disappeared hours before, GL commands his ring to probe his mind and reveal the truth. Returning to the world beyond the speed of light, GL frees the Flash but is then stunned himself. Flash rescues him and the Emerald Gladiator defeats the planet's ruling clique, freeing its working class to govern itself. The heroes then destroy both the computer formula for Flash's speed and the device which came up with it. Back on Earth, Flash reveals his identity to GL and they concoct a lame excuse to explain why they vanished for several hours to their girlfriends ("We got lost . . .").

MORE EMERALD GLOWS NEXT ISSUE

Guide CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA 247—The new JLA return to the original JLA headquarters. Conway/McDonnell.

FURY OF FIRESTORM 44—Firestorm saves Pittsburgh from destruction at the hands of Typhoon. Conway/Kayanan/Machlan/Kayanan & Giordano.

TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS 62—Raven, possessed by Trigon's power, shows the Titans their innermost fears. Wolfman/Perez/Tanghal/Patton & Giordano.

HEX 6—Fleisher/Texeira/Garzon.

VIGILANTE 26—The Electrocutioner crosses Vigilante's path as Adrian Chase pursues a drug dealer. Direct only. Kupperberg/T. Smith/Magyar.

THE OUTSIDERS 4—The Outsiders invade Soviet Russia. Direct only. Barr/Aparo/Aparo/Aparo.

Shipping October 22, on sale November 14.

BATMAN 392 — Batman and Catwoman. Moech/Mandrake/Mandrake/Mandrake.

SUPERMAN 416 —What is there about every March 12th that triggers a crime spree by Lex Luthor? Maggin/Swan/Williamson.

STAR TREK 23—Redjac has attacked the *Excelsior*. Isabella/Sutton/Villagran/Cowan & Janson.

AMETHYST 13—Dr. Fate helps a CRISIS-torn and blinded Amethyst back to Gemworld. Colon/Colon/Kesel/Colon & Kesel.

SUPER POWERS MINI-SERIES 6—The superheroes from Earth come face-to-face with Darkseid in the final issue of this series! Kupperberg/Kirby/Theakston/Kirby & Theakston.

AQUAMAN 1—New Venice is destroyed by Ocean Master. Aquaman goes on a secret mission for Atlantis. Pozner/Hamilton/Montano/Hamilton & Montano.

'MAZING MAN 2—DeStefano & Rozakis/DeStefano/Kesel/DeStefano & Kesel.

OMEGA MEN 35—Conclusion of the Omega Men/Teen Titans crossover. Painted cover. Direct only. Klein/McManus/McManus/McManus

LEGION OF SUPER HEROES 19—Is the Legion responsible for unleashing a mad killer race? Invisible Kid backup. Levitz/LaRocque/Mahlstedt/LaRocque & Mahlstedt.

SHADOW OF THE BATMAN 3—Reprint miniseries. Direct only. Englehart/Rogers/Austin/Rogers.

Shipping October 29, on sale November 21.

SWAMP THING 45—Swamp Thing is haunted by the ghosts of America's past. Moore/Lloyd/Totleben/Bissette & Totleben

BATMAN & THE OUTSIDERS 30—The People of the Abyss plot the creation of Looker and the death of humanity. Barr/Davis/Davis/Davis.

GREEN LANTERN 197—Guy Gardner and John Stewart battle it out. Englehart/Staton/Patterson/Staton & Patterson.

SGT. ROCK 408—Kanigher/Vicatan/Vicatan/Kubert.

WARLORD 102—Whether Morgan lives or dies depends solely on the martial skills of the Amazon Zupara. Fleisher/Cullins/Marcos/Grell.

BLUE DEVIL 21—Introducing Roadmaster. Cohn & Mishkin/Kupperberg/Magyar/Cullins & Martin.

WHO'S WHO 12—JLA, JSA, Kamandi, Jor-El, Kobra, Kole, Kid Devil and more. Wein/Various/Various/Cullins & Giordano.

BOOSTER GOLD 1—Booster Gold battles Blackguard. Jurgens/Jurgens/DeCarlo/Jurgens.

DEMON 2—Miniseries. Wagner/Wagner/Rankin/Wagner & Rankin.

INFINITY INC. 23—Solomon Grundy goes on an arctic rampage. CRISIS tie-in. Direct only.

THE NEW TEEN TITANS 17—Direct only. Wolfman/Barreto/Tanghal.

Shipping November 5, on sale November 28.

TALES OF THE LEGION OF SUPER HEROES 332—Levitz/Lightle/Mahlstadt/Lightle & Mahlstadt.

ACTION 576—Superman's journey to Earth's sister planet where Dinosaurs rule. Woolfolk/Shaffenberger.

DETECTIVE 559—Robin's reaction to Nocturna's loss. *Green Arrow* by J. Cavalieri. Moench/Colan/B. Smith/Colan & Smith.

ALL-STAR SQUADRON 54—The Dummy and his new gang attack as the CRISIS threatens to engulf 1942. R. Thomas/Clark/Colletta/Clark & DeZuniga.

V 13—Philip convinces the Leader to come to Earth. Bates/Infantino/DeZuniga/Bingham.

AMBUSH BUG STOCKING STUFFER 1—Cheeks is back, so is Ambush Bug, and yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. Fleming/Giffen/Oksner/Giffen & Oksner.

DC CHALLENGE 4—Darwin Jones, Dr. 13, Detective Chimp and Superman try to save Metropolis—plus Aquaman gets saved . . . sort of. Miniseries. Direct only. Levitz/Kane/Janson/Kane.

NIGHTWINGS GRAPHIC NOVEL—On the eve of an invasion from space, three strangers unite in a post-holocaust Rome of the far future.

THE OZ-WONDERLAND WARS 2—A Mad Tea Party, Winged Monkeys, Pig and Pepper. Miniseries. Direct only. Bridwell/Cavalieri/Lay/Lay/Lay.

WONDER WOMAN 329—Double-sized CRISIS tie-in issue. FINAL ISSUE. Newell/Heck/Barreto.

Booster Gold #1

1986 DC Calendar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Special issues increase in value at a faster rate than normal.

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1975 that the new *X-Men* 94 would spawn an entire industry centered around teenage mutants.

All of these valuable comics had one thing in common: they featured a significant change (or introduction) of a character, artist or storyline.

For example, *Thor* 337 marked Walt Simonson's return to the title with a new storyline. *Daredevil* 158 is the first of the fantastically innovative Frank Miller issues. *Spiderman* 121 is of course the Gwen Stacy "death issue." *Avengers* 100 features Barry Smith artwork and the return of every Marvel character who was an Avenger. The comic is also a 100 issue, which certainly enhances its collectability.

The trick, of course, is deciding what is "significant" and what is not. For example, I never thought the overhyped costume change in *Spiderman* 252 was important enough to justify the resulting spectacular demand for that issue.

Why? Because any thinking person would instantly realize that the new costume could not be a permanent change. No way is Marvel going to jeopardize its most popular merchandising and licensing character with an unrecognizable new costume.

Prices have since fallen for that issue after the reversion to the old Spiderman costume, and it's probably still priced too high in relation to its ultimate collectibility.

Here's a checklist for gauging the potential collectability of a comic:

1) Buy first issues with care and caution.
2) Buy first appearances of potentially popular characters that appear in other comics and try-out issues.
3) Buy early issues of a book that features a run of artwork by a popular accomplished artist.
4) Buy issues if they have any special collector offerings. (This is much safer as a general rule than buying first issues because you are at least buying into an established and popular title that will always have some collector appeal.)
5) Buy issues that feature a significant change in storyline or character development.

LAST RULE: THERE REALLY ARE NO RULES

It's always easy to predict the past; the future gives us the trouble. From our vantage point, we can now see which comics became collectible and why.

However, also realize that those comics which came into demand did so because few people anticipated that they would indeed become collectible. So if you slavishly follow rules, or take advice from distributors and retail stores, or study tips in columns like this one, you may still be following the herd. You're going to have to develop your own sixth sense about spotting a potentially collectible comic, and not be swayed by the illusion of anticipated demand.

For instance, in March 1973 I was told that the first issue of the new *Shazam!* would turn to gold. This new DC comic featured the re-introduction of Captain Marvel, the second most popular Golden Age superhero, with art by the original artist. How could I lose, how could I lose?

I bought a full case of *Shazam!* 1 on a well-meaning dealer's advice. A year later I discovered why they call Captain Marvel "The Big Red Cheese." His new book put me in the red, and the case of comics sat in my closet and fermented for about five years.

Remember: buying new comics successfully for profit takes either sophisticated finesse or dumb luck—both of which are in all too short supply.

*****

Before you think this column is all money, profit and dollar sign talk, let's get into the "fun" side of collecting as well.

I received a letter this week from a fan who had purchased my book *Comic Book Collecting for Fun and Profit*. He read the section in the book where I advised that beginning collectors investigate the thousands of back issues that are not currently popular in the marketplace.

He told me about all the fun he was having by going through the Price Guide and discovering all of these minor and off-beat comic titles that he had never seen or read. "I was amazed at how cheap so many

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A MINISERIES IS NOT NORMALLY A GOOD INVESTMENT—BUT THE WEST COAST AVENGERS RESULTED IN A REGULAR TITLE.

of those great comics are that were published in the last fifteen years," he wrote. "In fact, I've started buying and collecting back issues from 1970 to 1980 exclusively because I can get them cheaper than the current retail price for a new comic."

It's true. So many collectors pick out five or ten new comic titles they like, and brother that's it! They never prowl around through the thousands and thousands of relatively cheap and worthwhile back issues.

They wait in line for the latest issue of *American Flagg*, but turn up their noses at a chance to pick up a complete set of *Sword and Sorcery* comics, published by DC in 1973.

Need I point out that both the deservedly popular *American Flagg* and the overlooked *Sword of Sorcery* are both drawn by Howard Chaykin? And that you can buy the entire twelve year old, five-issue set of *Sword* for about the cost of one current issue of *Flagg*?

Crazy, but true.

Here's a way to have some fun with collecting and not spend too much of your comic book budget. If you have a favorite artist, go back and discover some of his earlier work in perhaps less popular and obscure back-issue comics.

John Byrne did some very interesting work for Charlton Comics before he moved over to Marvel. Jack Kirby's DC work in the early 1970s can be had for almost nothing. Wally Wood and Steve Ditko both worked together on DC's *Stalker*, which is often found in "Quarter Box Specials" at conventions.

And a book doesn't even have to be a particular artist's work to be worthy of interest and investigation. The fellow who wrote me mentioned that until he looked through the Price Guide, he was not even aware the DC Comics had published *Super Friends* comics from 1976 to 1981. This was one of his favorite tv shows, and he was delighted to discover he could now collect the comic as well (which, incidentally, features nice clean artwork by the talented Ramona Fradon).

And by all means, please go beyond the "superhero is god" collecting mentality.

KEY ISSUES OF HOT BOOKS—SUB-MARINER JOINS THE TEAM IN AVENGERS 262 AND A MAJOR PAGE OF MUTANT HISTORY IS WRIT IN X-MEN 200.

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"(HEROES FOR HOPE) WAS A SPECIAL ONE-TIME BENEFIT PROJECT BY MARVEL AND 54 OF COMICS' TOP CREATORS. ONCE THE COMIC WAS PRINTED, THE ARTWORK WAS RETURNED TO THE CREATORS AND THE PRINTING PLATES WERE DESTROYED AT THE PLANT." —JIM SHOOTER

Check out the back issues of war comics, westerns, romance comics, and the mystery/suspense titles published all through the 1960s and 1970s.

These books are cheap, friends, and they are fun. I'm not a big war comic freak, but I've enjoyed picking up the back issues of *Star Spangled War Stories* which feature the adult character and storyline "Enemy Ace" (drawn just right by Joe Kubert and written by one of the greatest comic book writers of all time, Robert Kanigher).

Next time you go to your favorite comic book store for this month's new releases, take a dip into the back issue stock. You just might discover a whole new world of collecting.

IF YOU AND I WERE REALLY SMART DEPARTMENT

Here's a whole new field of comic collectibles that everyone is ignoring—promotional posters and literature from comic book companies.

Every month DC, Marvel and the independents distribute colorful poster sheets and announcements to comic book retailers and wholesalers. Many times the stores display these posters for an upcoming comic book release, then they are discarded. Very few actually end up in collectors' hands, and those that do usually go right into the personal collections of retail comic book store employees.

Need I point out the strong similarity between these promotional posters and the movie posters of the 1930s and 1950s? Movie material is rare today because the movie theaters usually returned or discarded the original posters and lobby cards sent to them by the movie distributors.

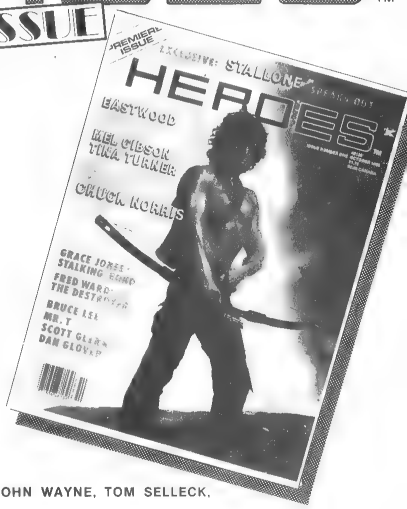
The exact same thing is happening in the comic book field today. The far-sighted collector could make a real bundle of money tomorrow if he started stockpiling all the related comic book promotional material that's coming out right now.

And please, no thank you notes for all these great tips. Just buy my extra copies of *Shazam* 1—you really can't lose . . .

CF

HEROES™

PREMIERE ISSUE



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☐8	

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

YOU'VE BEEN MIGHTY SWELL, LIL ABNER, BUT I'VE NO GO. EDDIE WILL NEVER ACCEPT THE MONEY-I'M—EARTHBOUND!
FIRE IN JUNE!
A KID WAS TRAPPED ON THE TOP FLOOR!—A YOUNG MAN DASHED IN AND TOSSED THE KID INTO A NET—SAFELY!
THEN THAT SIDE CRUMBLED!
THE FELLOW'S HOPELESSLY TRAPPED!
THEY WERE EDDIE!!
HE WORE A PANAMA HAT—AND A WHITE SUIT!
STOP—YOU'RE CRAZY, DAISY! YOU'RE THROWING YOUR LIFE AWAY!!
LOVE IS ON MAH SIDE!!
OH! AH FEELS SO WEARY AH DON'T CARE IF AH NEVAH WAKES UP!
(-YOU WON'T MY BOY? IN FEW MINUTES, I'LL BE BACK WITH MY INSTRUMENTS!)
(-FATHER MUST BE WORKING ON HOT MOM WITH HIS INSTRUMENTS—OH!—IT'S HORRIBLE!! I MUSTN'T THINK OF IT!!—)
GAL!—YO' LOOKS SAD AN LONELY WOULD YO LIKE A SAUCER O' SWEET PATOOT TO CHEER YO UP!?
OH!—YOUR FINGER IS BLEEDING!
SHECKS!—IT'S NUTHIN'! AH WERE TRYIN' TO PEEL A PRESSARVED TURNIP WITH MAH KNIFE AN IN THE EXCITEMENT, HE SNAPPED AT ME!!
THAT BLOOD!!—IT'S "TYPE X"!!
OH!—IF FATHER HAD ONLY KNOWN ABOUT IT IN TIME—THAT BOY WOULD NOT HAVE HAD TO DIE!!

Capp's interest in the rustic was shared by quite a few people in America in the 1930s. The *Lum and Abner* radio show had taken to the air nationally back in 1931, bringing the comic adventures of a pair of hick Arkansas storekeepers to a wide audience. In 1933 came *The National Barn Dance*, a radio show that purveyed country music and hillbilly humor. On Broadway that same year *Tobacco Road*, the hit play based on Erskine Caldwell's novel, caused a sensation. And in July of 1934 Billy DeBeck took his Barney Google to the hillbilly country where he would eventually encounter the formidable Snuffy Smith. Abner made his debut at an auspicious time.

For his initial story Capp turned to a classic theme, one that has been used for comedy purposes for countless centuries. That of the country boy in the big city. After introducing the benighted rural community of Dogpatch, along with Abner Yokum, his Mammy and Pappy and the lovely—though nowhere near as fleshy as she'd be a few years later—Daisy Mae, Capp had his handsome young hero journey to far off Manhattan to visit a rich relative. Most of the humor comes from this innocent abroad setup. It's possible Capp didn't originally realize the fun that was to be had right around home in Dogpatch. He eventually began to explore its possibilities, particularly in the new Sunday page that began in 1935, and to utilize all of Dogpatch's potential for commenting upon the greed, stupidity and outright swinishness of humanity in general.

Like his friend and colleague, Caniff, Capp seems to have been fascinated with the movies. His continuities of the thirties, particularly the daily ones, occupy themselves with both parodies of current motion pictures and imitations of them. He would make fun of a typical Hollywood horror film with a sequence wherein a mad doctor tries to transplant Pappy's brain into the skull of a gorilla, then try his hand at emulating the popular screwball movie comedies with a continuity in which Abner teams up with the ghost of a Manhattan playboy. And in the 1930s, although he was already christening characters with names like Cecil Cesspool, Basil Bassoon and Herkimer Haggle, Capp was still capable of doing a sentimental yarn, one that would conclude with a tear drop showing at the corner of his bucolic hero's eye.

Capp alternated the more serious episodes with the lighter ones, such as the recurrent recounting of some deep-dyed villain's attempts to capture and eat the Yokum's beloved pig, Salomey. It was in the late 1930s that Capp first concocted Sadie Hawkins Day. The annual event, where the single ladies of Dogpatch get to chase and, hopefully, capture the eligible, such as they are, bachelors, is a freewheeling parallel to one of the strip's major themes—Daisy's Mae's dogged pursuit of the obtuse Abner.

Over the years, Capp had considerable help in turning out *Li'l Abner*. His first assistant, who joined him soon after the strip began, was the gifted Mo Leff. Capp rarely mentioned Leff subsequently, possibly because he quit Capp's stable to go to work for Ham Fisher. Andy Amato and Harvey Curtis followed Leff and worked with Capp for just about the rest of the life of the strip. Walter Johnson was there for years, and a number of other artists put in time, among them Frank Frazetta, Lee Elias, Bob Lubbers and Stan Drake. Eventually Capp did no drawing at all, concentrating on the scripts. And even the stories were often joint efforts, the product of bull sessions with Curtis and Amato.

During the Second World War, there was a swing to a broader, more raucous kind of comedy in America. In the movies, for instance, Abbott & Costello type epics supplanted the quieter, more sophisticated screwball comedies. *Li'l Abner* changed in the 1940s, too, as Capp switched to broader, more low down episodes. That blend of the satirical and the scatological that made him a sort of outhouse Voltaire. The voluptuous women remained the same, or possibly became even more so, but everybody else got cartoonier and, usually, uglier. It was in this decade that Capp introduced some of his most memorable characters and continuities. In the Forties, Abner first wandered into snowbound Lower Slobbovia, "where the favorite dish of the natives is raw polar bear and vice versa." During his initial tour of the blighted country, Abner encountered the dreaded Lena the Hyena and nearly got stuck marrying her. Lena, as Capp later

A CLASSIC STRIP FROM APRIL 21, 1946

described her, was "a girl so frightful that even I could not draw her." Keeping Lena teasingly hidden from his readers, Capp initiated a contest for the best depiction of her. This contest generated an enormous number of responses and a satisfying amount of publicity. The winning face was drawn by that master of the peculiar, Basil Wolverton.

During the Forties, Capp also took to kidding contemporary fads and personalities. He made fun of everything from Frank Sinatra to zoot suits, taking time to kid *Dick Tracy* with an even more brutal and invulnerable sleuth named Fearless Fosdick. And he introduced the Schmoo. The fifties might've been another smooth sailing decade for the strip if Capp hadn't committed the tactical error of allowing Li'l Abner and Daisy Mae, at long last to get married.

Capp admitted, years later, that he decided on the wedding because of a remark a United Features editor he wasn't fond of made one day. "He said rather contemptuously, 'Hey, don't think of yourself as another Dickens. You're a guy who knows a trick: Abner doesn't marry Daisy Mae. Be grateful you thought of it, because that's what makes the strip go—nothing else.' Well, I was horrified. So I got them married." Initially the marriage, which took place In 1952, seemed not to affect the strip. It got Capp a lot of publicity and Abner on the cover of *Life*. but something went out of the feature with the wedding and the domesticated Abner was not the man he had been before the fateful day when Marryin' Sam tied the knot.

In its last years, in the 1970s, *Li'l Abner* was in decline. Circulation kept dropping from the 900 paper high to the 300 It would end with. One other reason was that Capp had grown increasingly conservative and cantankerous. Younger readers, who had no recollection of the happier days of the Thirties and Forties, found little to admire in his broad kidding of the politicians and political stances they held sacred. Other readers, many of whom had assumed Capp was a liberal, didn't care for Abner much anymore either. "My politics didn't change," Capp maintained to the end. "I had always been for those who were despised, disgraced and denounced by other people." In 1977, Capp made up his mind to let the strip die and he closed up shop, saying, "It's been an exhilarating forty-three years." He died two years later. **CF**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

A HEARTY FAREWELL FROM THE MARVEL FAMILY.

Since this particular magic phrase isn't quite as powerful, he won't turn into a super adult, but rather a super boy. Decked out in a blue version of the Marvel costume, Captain Marvel, Jr. whizzed back to *Master Comics* for a long, successful career. It says something about how firmly the tradition of dual identity was now established in comics that Freddy, crippled after his Nazi encounter, chose to return to that role when he wasn't crimefighting.

Lighting struck again a year after the advent of CM, Jr. This time it was Mary Marvel, who first flashed into being in *Captain Marvel Adventures* #18. Her real name was Mary Batson and she turned out to be Billy's long lost sister. By accident, after learning her brother's secret, Mary says, "Shazam!" And—*Whoom!*—she changes, too. "I feel strong—powerful," she exclaims, not at all disappointed that she's been transformed into a super teenager and not a fullgrown woman. Billy and the lieutenants remain the only ones who can bridge the gap between adolescence and adulthood with a magic word. Mary, by the way, has a separate but equal version of the word. Whereas Billy's Shazam stands for Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles and Mercury, Mary's stands for Selena, Hippolyta, Ariadne, Zephyrus, Aurora and Minerva. You can envision old Shazam, off in limbo someplace, tugging on his whiskers as he works out these lists of gods and mythical figures to match the initials of his name. Mary went on to become the star boarder at *Wow Comics* with #9 (January, 1943), nudging Mr. Scarlet and Commando Yank into second banana slots.

While all these additions were being made, Captain Marvel went on having a great many escapades on his own, eventually as many as nine a month—in the middle 1940s *Captain Marvel Adventures*, containing four stories in each issue, came out every two weeks. He encountered supervillains like Ibac—whose magic word-name stood for Ivan, Borgia, Attila and Califula—malicious trolls, crackpot inventors like Professor Edgewise Smith and a wide variety of other crooks, thieves, spies, mystics and troublemakers.

Two of his most memorable meetings in the Forties had him confronting two very unlikely foes. Starting in *Whiz* #16 (April 1, 1941) he battled fellow good guy Spy Smasher. The "enemy of fifth columnists" was captured by his longtime opponent the Mask and subjected to the "pyrohypnotic power of the Brain-O-Graph." This leaves him with his "brain completely twisted." It takes Captain Marvel until issue #18, taking up both his story space and that of SS, to halt his colleague's career as a saboteur. He does that finally by hypnotizing him back "to what you were." This monumental encounter, filling up nearly sixty pages altogether, was obviously Fawcett's attempt to emulate earlier comic book combats such as the one between the Human Torch and Sub-Mariner.

Mr. Mind, who battled the captain through the twenty-five chapters of *The Monster Society of Evil* serial that began in *Captain Marvel Adventures #22*, was a worm. Small and green, and apparently belonging to the caterpillar family, his dreams of glory equalled those of Sivana and the organization of the "Earth's greatest criminals" that he put together was impressive. Otto Binder, who'd been the head writer on the Captain Marvel saga since late in 1941, once said of the meeting in which Mr. Mind was created, "Somebody said, 'Why not take the most *unusual* thing we can think of? Not the traditional or galactic villain, nor robot, nor this nor that of the routine masterminds, but just the goofiest of all things. Maybe a *worm*!" While the series is fondly remembered and Mr. Mind has earned a lasting place in the villainy hall of fame, many of the episodes were godawful to behold. As Beck acknowledges, "Some of the panels, as we can look back at them today, were quite poorly drawn, it must be admitted." He himself had little to do with the actual drawing of the serial. "Many different artists worked on the drawings," he explained. "World War II was going on at the time and artists were leaving their drawing boards and entering the armed services in droves."

The world's mightiest mortal survived the post war slump. He went on confronting villains—such as King Kull—and eccentrics—such as the appealing talking tiger Mr. Tawny. He continued performing his superheroics with the casual dedication that had characterized his less than serious approach to crimebusting from the start. In 1953, plagued by faltering sales and continuing litigation from DC, the captain retired. He returned to the newsstands twenty years later, along with Billy, Sivana, Beautia and the rest of the regulars. Beck came back, too, for awhile. But the captain's comeback was not exactly triumphant and longtime admirers would just as well forget about it. CF

Games

BY STEVE PERRIN

PERSONAL STUFF

In February of this year I experienced a major life-change. I left the Chaosium, a company I had enjoyed working for as a game designer for four years. While I was there I co-wrote the *Stormbringer* role-playing game and wrote *Worlds of Wonder*, *Superworld* and *Elfquest*. I also contributed to such projects as the licensed *Call of Cthulu* game and *Thieves' World* game aid, as well as numerous supplements for the *RuneQuest* role-playing game (which I wrote while I was freelancing and attempting to hold down a real job before going to work for Chaosium).

Unfortunately, Chaosium ran into the same problem which had earlier beset the giant of the industry, TSR Inc. There were too many people working at Chaosium in comparison to the amount of products being produced. The Ol' Demon Cashflow struck, and—largely because I had interest in other things beside Chaosium's products—I was one of the employees who left to make the cash flow easier. The parting was amicable. I am working for some potential projects for them on a freelance basis, just as I did before becoming an employee.

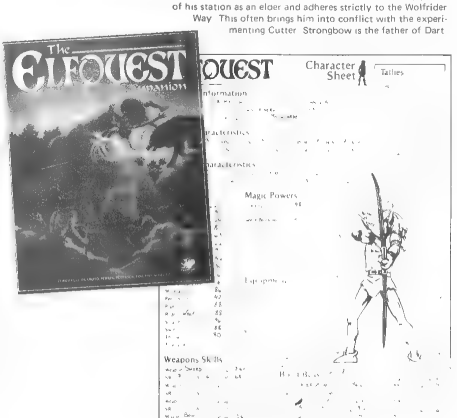
This makes for an interesting study in relative scales of game companies. TSR had to cut down from a payroll of almost 400 people at their peak to around 100 now. Chaosium went from 10 people to its current 6.

Since I now operate as a freelancer in the game (and general writing) business, I find myself with an even more eclectic outlook on the industry. If anything, this turn of events has broadened my perspective. Moreover, my new part-time job at the local *Comics and Comix* store gives me some real insight on how the reading public views the games I and others have been producing. I'll have more to say on that score in future columns.

As an idea of what a game freelancer can find himself doing, let's look over what I have in the pipeline.

Hero Games has monopolized a lot of my freelance time. I now work as an editor for their products. My first editing job, *Fantasy Hero*, is reviewed further on (naturally, I won't discuss the quality of the editing—just what is of use to the gamer).

I also compiled a series of game statistics translation for the company's new *Justice Inc.* supplement, *Lands of Mystery*. I'll get to that one in a little bit, too.


Strongbow
Greatest of the tribe's archers, Strongbow is taciturn. He rarely speaks, preferring always to Send. He is fiercely proud of his station as an elder and adheres strictly to the Wolfrider Way. This often brings him into conflict with the experimenting Cutter. Strongbow is the father of Dart.
The ELFQUEST Companion
QUEST
Character Sheet
Tallies
Information
Characteristics
Magic Powers
Weapons Skills

Coming up from Hero are two supplements to *Champions* that I have edited—*The Gadget Book* and *Super-Agents*. I am now writing a game for them which is tentatively titled *Robot Hero* and attempts to allow players to use all the special effects found in the increasingly popular animated movies and tv series featuring Japanese robots. The game will feature some new mechanics that I am very proud of, but since I'm the author, a review here would hardly be proper!

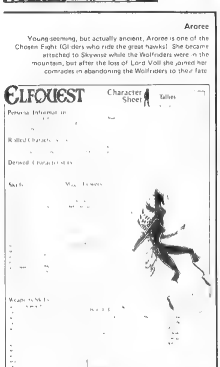
I'll announce its publication here, though. Count on it.

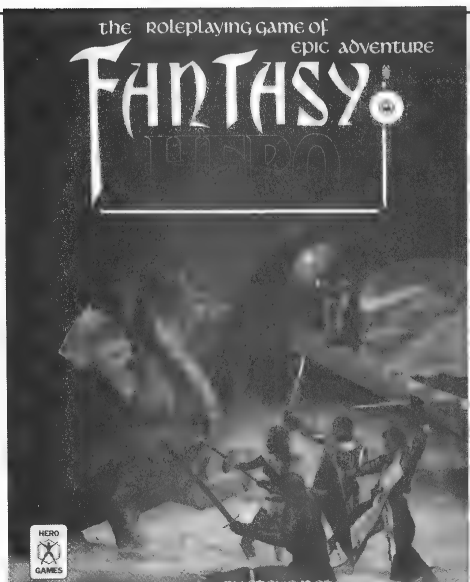
Last anyone think Hero Games has me exclusively under contract, I should mention that there is probably (no contracts signed yet) a module for Mayfair's *DC Heroes* game in my future. I'm using an old favorite of mine, Firestorm, in a knock-down-dragout with a couple of classic villains from the Flash and Hawkman's rogues galleries. If this goes over well, I have a few more ideas—but that's a disclosure best kept till another time.

MORE ELFQUEST STUFF

Speaking of Chaosium, one of the last things I worked on while I was employed there has now hit the stands.

The Elfquest Companion offers long-time Elfquest fan Elizabeth Cerritelli's articles on finding an elf-name and designing the appearance and attitudes of an elf character, along with my "alternate history,"


Aroree
Young seeming, but actually ancient, Aroree is one of the Chosen Eight (Gliders who ride the great hawks). She became attached to Skywise while the Wolfriders were in the mountain, but after the loss of Lord Voll she joined her comrades in abandoning the Wolfriders to their fate
ELFQUEST
Character Sheet
Tallies



authorised by WaRP Graphics, that allows players to play wolfriders who aren't part of Cutter's pack.

Chaosium's resident zoologist, Sandy Petersen, penned an article on wolf ecology which explains aspects of the wolfriders that may seem strange to those who just read the comics. Jeff Okamoto, who was one of my game playtesters, wrote up all the book's Wolfriders and their significant friends who did not appear in the game box. Finally, I did two adventure scenarios for play. One has the Wolfriders dealing with trolls who are polluting the river the pack depends on. The other has another elf-tribe, the non-wolf-related Plainsrunners, facing the worst enemy of any plain-dwelling creature—a prairie fire. Wendy Pini created a beautiful cover of a Wolfrider tribe fighting a maddened mammoth, and several new illustrations for the interior.

As author and packager, I can hardly be objective. However, I think that players of my *Elfquest* game will get a lot out of it. It's $6.00 and can be ordered from Chaosium at the address following this article.

SUPER HEROIC FANTASY

Fantasy Hero has been on the back burner at Hero Games for a long time. For several months, Hero Games ran a contest in their Adventurer's Club newsletter to choose a different title. They finally announced a winner and gave him the prize,

but then decided that even the winning name wasn't as good as the working title. Finally, author Steve Peterson put it all together, slapped on the *Fantasy Hero* title and handed it to me to edit.

I take no responsibility for the creature descriptions and much of the gamemaster material, since they were completed prior to my involvement. Mostly, I worked clarifying things and correcting assorted spelling and syntax errors. The game system is standard Hero Games, with Peterson's additions to give play a fantasy flavor.

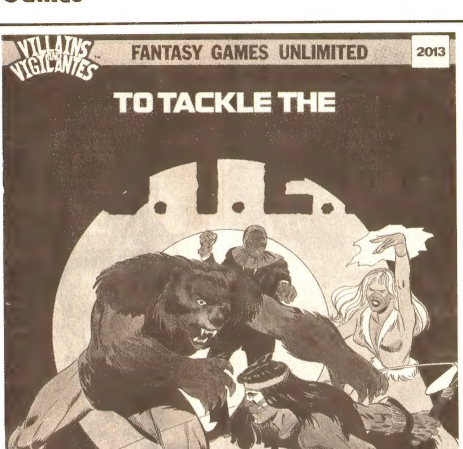
In all, the game works well. The magic system is perhaps the most complex in gaming. Each spell must be specifically designed from general effects and modifiers provided in the rules, effectively making every spell unique to its caster. It works, and gives a "real magic" feel to the game. But developing a sorcery character to play can take quite awhile.

This is not a game for a new player. However, if a veteran player, especially a *Champions* veteran, wants to move on to high fantasy, this is a good way to do it.

FANTASTIC JOURNEYS

Hero Games has issued *Lands of Mystery* as a supplement to their excellent 1930s role-playing game, *Justice, Inc.* In 96 pages, JI co-author Aaron Allston takes the reader to other lands and outlines how to run the romance and adventure of the lost worlds genre of pulp fiction epitomized by Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Pellucidar*, H. Rider Haggard's *She*, and A. Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*.

Allston obviously knows his genre and loves it. As part of the book, he presents his own lost world of Zorandar—full of dinosaurs and cavemen and ancient Romans. He emphasizes the ingredient of these stories that sets them apart from a lot of other adventure fiction: the High Romance that causes a fearless adventurer to get all weak in the knees when he first sees the innocent jungle princess. Other authors would add a special characteristic like Romanticism to the character design rules, making the game system significantly different from others in the Hero



system. Allston simply points out how the genre is played, and leaves it to the gamester and players to do it properly.

This kind of playing involves a lot of gamemaster control. The gamemaster has to make sure that people are developing characters who will fit within the genre and the players have to be ready to react promptly to the genre's promptings. For a playing group that is used to working together to make the game pleasurable for all, this whole genre is a great experience.

If you are just looking for another fantasy world to stick an adventure into, this book is also useful. Zorander is a fascinating world. Those of you who buy the first edition should watch out; the numbers on the map keys don't really jibe with the numbers on the maps. If you are watching for it, you can correct the mistakes, but you do have to think about it.

There are complete monster and character statistics for the various denizens of *Call of Cthulu*, Pacesetter's *Chill* or Fantasy Games Unlimited's *Daredevils*, as well as for *Justice Inc.* If there are problems with these translations, blame me. I did them. As far as I can tell, with *Lands of Mystery* players of any of these games can have as much fun as a JI player.

T.O.T.E.M. TALES

Fantasy Games Unlimited has finally issued *To Tackle the T.O.T.E.M.* for its *Villains and Vigilantes* game system.

Despite its name and the American West motif of several of the villains inside, Total Order Through Elimination of the Masses is not a cowboy and indian crime cartel. Apparently, the acronym is purely coincidental. This bothers me, especially considering the western motif shown by most of the villains and the fact that the adventure is set in Tucson, Arizona. Apparently, the author wanted to have both an adventure that was set in an environment familiar to him with familiar characters, and involve a world-spanning crime cartel. Unfortunately, he didn't think of a way to actually bring them together. He just invented an acronym that sounded like it was involved with American Indians and hoped that it would provide the proper Wild Western flavor.

I'm not impressed by this reasoning. It would have taken little extra work to actually tie the organization into Indian themes. Oh well, can't have everything.

I'm disappointed with the name problems because otherwise it's a fun game. The villains are tough, the plot is unified and one event follows from another. Other FGU adventures have suffered from disconnected plots with no real link between the initial incidents and the main plan of the villain(s) involved. This adventure is far more tightly constructed, with one event flowing into another. Author Jeff O'Hare did his job well.

For those who want to use this scenario to play *Superworld*, Jeff Herman and my article on how to convert characters from one system to the other takes up the last couple of pages.

Followers of the comic art scene might find it interesting that former *Avengers* and *Justice League of America* artist Don Heck does the artwork for the adventure.

CF

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Elfquest Companion—Chaosium Inc., P.O. Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706
To Tackle the T.O.T.E.M.—Fantasy Games Unlimited, P.O. Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11578
Fantasy Hero and *Lands of Mystery*—Hero Games, 92A 21st Ave., San Mateo, CA 94402

Avatar from WIZARDS.

"So what you saw as really exceptional work in spots of *Fire and Ice* and sections of *American Pop* was, in a sense, the end of a long, hard and complex training program for another generation of American animators."

What does the future hold for Ralph Bakshi?

"Well, how should I put it," he muses. "I've found something completely new in animation that has me very excited—and that, as much as any other reason, is why I'm coming back. It's a new approach which should lead to a different kind of film than I've ever done before. I do think animation has to keep moving forward to be interesting, because of the tremendous competition from Spielberg and Lucas's techniques in live-action.

"I can also say this," he continues. "I'm going to run the animation company in much of a traditional mold—the way Walt Disney operated with reliance upon his Sequence Directors, in the days of *Fantasia* and *Pinocchio*. I'm not saying we'll be capable of doing the same calibre of work; but that style of operation would be more my intent. The only way I can do that is to step back and let the guys that I trained become the men who do the work, and have them take on newer and larger responsibilities."

What will that new project be? Bakshi cautiously avoids mentioning the subject matter, title or special processes he has in mind. We can only hope that, when he is ready to announce his next movie, he will choose *COMICS FEATURE* as his forum for letting the cat out of the bag. After all, the last time Bakshi let a cat out of a bag, its name was *Fritz*, and he proved to be a feline sensation. Our best wishes go with Ralph Bakshi, for the sensations we look forward to him bringing us in the future...

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